THE STONES OF VILNIUS David O'Rourke 'FREDDY THE PIG' RETURNS Darla Donnelly

COMMONWEAL

A Review of Religion, Politics, and Culture

April 6, 2001

Catholics & Liberals

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Can We Get Along?

William Galston

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To the Editors

Medium is the message

John O'Malley's recent article "Interpreting Vatican II: Version Two" (March 9) is wise, measured, faithful, and has a panoramic clarity that is born of meticulous respect for detail and nuance. His rhetoric embodies the style he identifies so wonderfully.

JOSEPH J. MCHUGH
Minneapolis, Minn.

Those other liberals

I heartily applaud *Commonweal* for continuing the discussion of Vatican II and the papacy of John Paul II ("Interpreting Vatican II"). There is, perhaps, no more important issue for Catholics than how the church defines itself, treats its believers, and relates to others in the new millennium. John O'Malley has it exactly right about the way the Catholic church ought to function in the wake of Vatican II. However, James Hitchcock is also right about the way the church sees itself in the modem world under Pope John Paul II: pretty much the same way it did before Vatican II.

As a liberal Catholic, I must confess that I did not recognize my beliefs in Hitchcock's analysis of "religious liberals." He must be referring to those other liberals. But I do embrace most of the reforms of the Vatican II, which emphasize a more collegial, dialogical, ecumenical church—one that teaches the truth in love, one that is a respectful listener and, therefore, one that has respect for conscience. I do not think there is anything sinful or heretical about such beliefs.

TONY DiSTEFANO
Alexandria, Va.

Confessing to Christ

In response to the article "Empty Confessionals" (February 23), I am puzzled as to why anyone should stay away from confession because of a growing sense of collective sin. Reconciliation is not for the confession of social or collective sins. It is the place for us to confess our personal transgressions against the environment, our personal acts or even thoughts involving racial or other prejudice, and other such misdeeds. Perhaps, however, in a different sense, most sin is collective through its effects on others, and some priests today give penances that will rectify or at least help to heal the rift resulting from the damage we may have done.

Jesus apparently knew that, for most people, confessing to God in the privacy of their room would not be sufficient for them to remove their guilt. Nowhere did he say, "Go in privacy to a friend, confess your sins, and they will be forgiven." In confession we know that Christ is present in the priest, that it is Christ to whom we confess.

ELEANOR P. MERRICK
Medford, N.J.

Last confession

I have a confession to make. The year was 1964, and I was what some now call a stay-at-home wife and mother. With a flock of my own to care for, I had few opportunities to commit great or even interesting sins.

I decided to ask a priest in the confessional how to make a so-called "good confession," given the circumstances of my life. His response is still etched in my memory: "Stay home in your kitchen, mother; you're doing a wonderful job." And that was my last confession. I now attend communal penance services.

NANCY SULLIVAN MURRAY
Syracuse, N.Y.

Avenue of forgiveness

If I remember correctly from my sacramental theology courses years ago, the basis for the sacrament of reconciliation is Jesus' coming to the Apostles after the Resurrection and saying, "Peace be with you" (John 20:19). After their betrayal of him, and their cowardice, Jesus does not come to them with "tough love" demands or requirements for repentance.

This sacrament was not always a part of the church. It is important to remember its roots: the reconciliation of those who had cut themselves off from the Christian community after baptism and wished to be reconciled with the community again. We should also remember that private confession was not always part of the Roman rite either, but was the result of monastic practices in fourth- and fifth-century England, Scotland, and Ireland.

The *Catechism* notes that "the Eucharist...cleanses us from past sins and preserves us from future sins," and that the "Eucharist strengthens our charity...and this living charity wipes away venial sins." It is important to understand the relation of the Eucharist to forgiveness of sin. When we pray "Lord, have mercy," "forgive us as...we forgive..." we are acknowledging our sinfulness and need for God.

LUCILLE CASTRO
Colts Neck, N.J.

Popes & Jews

I appreciate the series of articles [January 26, March 9] regarding the popes, the Jews, and anti-Semitism. It's about time that the Catholic church acknowledge its role in being less than strident in its opposition to Nazism and related ills.

(RABBI) DAVID Z. BEN-AMI
Harrisburg, Pa.

Pope not convicted

Richard Cohen's review [March 9] of Michael Phayer's *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust, 1930–1965* and Susan Zucotti's *Under His Very Windows* might more justly be titled "Pius XII: Not Convicted" rather than "Not Vindicated," especially in the present media atmosphere.

One would think from current media that it is a proven fact that Pope

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COMMONWEAL

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Pius XII favored the Nazis and had no concern for the Jews or others persecuted by them. Such a contention is contradicted by the many lives saved by people working directly for the Holy See and by the fact that in Italy, where the pope's influence was most immediately and directly felt, the effort to save Jewish lives was especially noteworthy. This would not have happened if the pope were hostile or even indifferent to these activities.

For all their scholarship, Phayer and Zucotti provide their readers not with verdicts based on evidence, but with their own interpretations of a situation for which the evidence about people's actions and motivations may be ambiguous or even lacking.

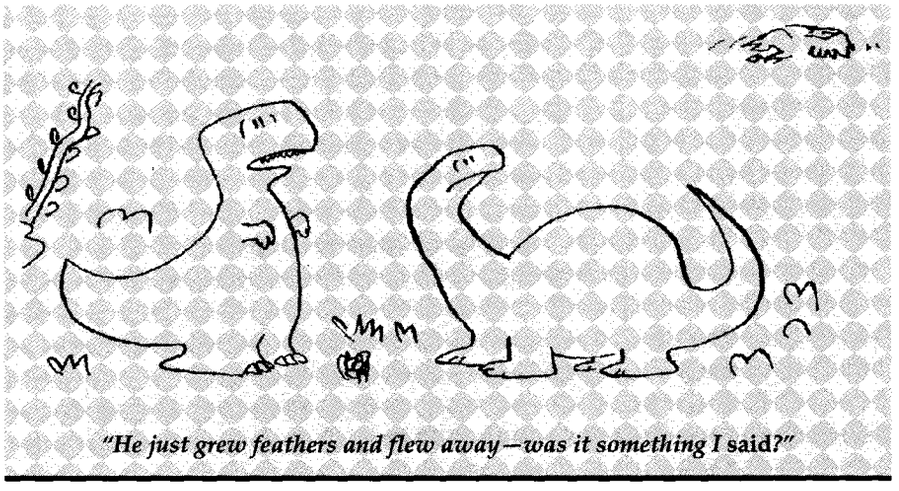
Cohen offers a couple of citations from Phayer that indicate the interpretive nature of his conclusions: Pius's "wish to play a major role in brokering peace meant that he favored 'a diplomatic remedy for a moral outrage'" and "the Vatican 'gambled, putting its moral authority at stake for the sake of a favorable diplomatic position.'" It is doubtful that the trained diplomat who was Pius XII would have thought so disdainfully of diplomacy—or, for that matter, of being a peacemaker. Why should diplomacy not be a tool in dealing with a moral outrage? And how better to remedy the moral outrages occurring than to help bring an ever more destructive war to an end? Attempting such diplomacy was indeed a gamble for the Vatican since it held so few cards.

For those of your readers who are tempted to believe the papacy can perform diplomatic miracles based on the fact that it is rightly credited with a share in the dissolution of the Soviet Empire, they should know that Pius XII would have seen himself as commanding a very different church, not far from the nadir of its diplomatic influence. His predecessor, Benedict XV, received mostly scorn for his carefully wrought proposals to bring World War I to an end, and saw the Holy See excluded when the peace treaty was written.

Pius faced a second world war whose gravity was enormously increased beyond that of the first by the emergence of aggressive and criminal totalitarian powers, fighting on both sides of the conflict. The fact that the political and military leaders who pursued World War II to victory managed to end up with the world effectively divided into two armed camps on the brink of a third and potentially totally destructive war should be a caution against assuming how much Pius could have achieved had he acted otherwise.

(MSGR.) FRANCIS J. MANISCALCO

The writer is director of communications for United States Catholic Conference of Bishops.



"He just grew feathers and flew away—was it something I said?"

Uncritical review

Richard Cohen's review of Michael Phayer's *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust, 1930–1965* uncritically accepts the author's unproven thesis. Phayer contends that Pius XII was sympathetic to Germany, if not specifically pro-Nazi, and placed an anti-Communist agenda ahead of both concern for the Jews and the defeat of Nazi Germany.

Yet, nowhere is there any documented evidence provided in Phayer's book for such a charge, primarily because there is none, as recently acknowledged by the Catholic-Jewish historical commission studying the actions of the church during World War II. There is, however, a wealth of documentation to the contrary, including the agreement of Pius to maintain silence on conditions in Stalin's Russia after the Soviet Union joined the Allied war effort, and his intervention to assure U.S. aid to the Communist nation.

Pius XII was primarily concerned with saving lives rather than high-minded pronouncements that would have accomplished little. Working behind the scenes and at the scenes through the papal nuncios was more effective than issuing public statements from the safety of the Vatican. As Phayer himself acknowledges, there was little the Holy See could do to force the Nazis to end their campaign for a "Final Solution." But Pius could save lives. Dramatic public anti-Nazi gestures could have severely limited, if not ended altogether, the church's capability to save lives, particularly in Germany and the Axis satellite states.

The Jewish lives saved by actions of the church under the direction of Pius XII accomplished what no other agency, government, or entity at the time was able to accomplish. Phayer claims that if Pius XII had issued a formal bombshell, more lives would have been saved. He does not, however, explain how that could have been done.

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Commonweal, [ISSN 0010-3330] A Review of Public Affairs, Religion, Literature, and the Arts, is published biweekly except Christmas/New Year's; and monthly July and August, by Commonweal Foundation, 475 Riverside Drive, Rm. 405, New York, NY 10115. Telephone: (212) 662-4200. E-mail: commonweal@msn.com. Web: http://www.commonwealmagazine.org. Toll-free: 888-495-6755. Fax: (212) 662-4183. Display advertising correspondence should be sent to Roth Advertising, Inc., 2 Park Avenue, Manhasset, NY 11030 (516) 627-9292, classified advertising correspondence to 475 Riverside Dr. POSTMASTER: send address changes to Commonweal, 475 Riverside Dr., Room 405, New York, NY 10115.

Commonweal is indexed in Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, Catholic Periodical Index, Index of American Periodical Verse, Book Review Digest, and Book Review Index. Microfilm from Vol. 1, 1924, to current issues available through University Microfilm, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106 and on Microfiche from Bell & Howell, Wooster, OH 44691. *Commonweal* articles are also available at many libraries and research facilities on CD-ROM and in electronic data bases. Serials Data program No.: ISSN 0010-3330. Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional offices. Copyright © 2001 Commonweal Foundation. Single Copy, $2.50. Yearly subscriptions, U.S., $44; Canada, $49; foreign, $54. Special two-year rate: U.S. $75; Canada, $81; foreign, $87. Annual rates for air-mail delivery outside U.S.: Western Hemisphere, $84; Europe, $89; other parts of the world, $99. All Canadian and foreign subscriptions must be paid in U.S. dollars by International Money Order or by check on a U.S. bank.

Illustrations: Cover design: Christopher Young; cover art: Charlot; pp. 3, 4, 28, Baloo, Rothco; pp. 3, 8, 15, 21, 25, Valery; p. 6, Matt/©The Telegraph plc, London, Rothco; pp. 7, 24, Ross, Rothco; p. 9, courtesy The Israel Interfaith Association; p. 12, Schwadron; columnist portraits, Elaine Mills.

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Stealth foreign policy

What is the foreign policy of the United States? And who's running it? • Is it still Clinton's? For the moment, many Clinton administration policies remain in effect—in the Balkans, in Europe, in China, in Colombia, in Iraq, against rogue nations, and lackadaisically in those places in Africa where there was never much of a policy in the first place.

• Is it Bush's? Flashy start notwithstanding, the top level of the president's foreign-policy team has gone undercover for clarification after the intra-Republican flap that greeted Secretary of State Colin Powell's first trip to the Mideast. In the face of a failing sanctions policy, Powell's talk of "smarter" sanctions against Iraq rather than arming opposition groups unhinged some Republicans. So, who's in charge? Powell? Condoleezza Rice? Vice President Richard Cheney? The midlevel team is in transition: sub-cabinet posts are still being filled and it will be some time, as the news reports say, before the appropriate reviews have been completed and policies confirmed or revised.

Yet even as the foreign-policy makers battle it out, a new policy is taking shape. But it's not the State Department that is doing it. The Pentagon and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld have jumped into the opening created by the diplomats' sluggishness or slugfest.

Take the outbreak of fighting in Macedonia: NATO has thirty-seven thousand soldiers in neighboring Kosovo, and an intervention of a fairly modest sort could quickly curb Albanian insurgents stirring up trouble both in Macedonia and Serbia. But as William Pfaff reports (page 8), the Pentagon will not budge beyond its peacekeeping duties in Kosovo and has vetoed any NATO intervention, even with European troops. Given George W. Bush's campaign threats to pull U.S. peacekeeping troops out of Bosnia and Kosovo, perhaps we should just be grateful they're still in place at all.

Nation-building may not be high on the Republican agenda, but NATO, with or without U.S. troops, could and should put the brakes on another, and potentially more serious, bout of interethnic warfare in the Balkans. Campaign rhetoric and our stand-back posture not only encourage irridentist dreams of a "Greater Albania," but risk the future of NATO, providing further justification and legitimation for an independent European Defense Force.

Take another instance of emerging policy making: the Koreas, North and South. The Clinton administration worked to the last for an agreement with Kim Jong Il that would have ended North Korea's efforts to develop long-range nuclear missiles and sell missile technology to Pakistan and Iran, among others. Negotiations looked promising but ran up against the clock. When South Korean President Kim Dae Jung visited Washington on March 7, his unceasing efforts for rapprochement with the North were brought up short with Bush's adamant refusal of any immediate resumption of U.S. negotiations with the North. This was a grave disappointment to Kim, indeed, almost an insult.

Why not work diplomatically to bring North Korea out of its isolation and draw its people back from the brink of starvation? Why say no? True, the North is not wholly trustworthy, so verification mechanisms must be part of any continuing

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negotiations, but there was no good reason for Bush's dismissal. There is, however, a very dubious and dangerous reason. Could it be that the administration's enthusiasm for a national missile defense program (NMD) will hold Korea, North and South, hostage to the system's planning and budgeting? After all, if you don't have a rogue nation with nuclear missiles, you don't need a system to defend against it.

That system, or better the idea of a system, left over from the Reagan years has thus far failed test after test, in particular what would seem essential, the ability to intercept incoming missiles (see, "Missile Offense," August 11, 2000). Yet Secretary Rumsfeld and his deputy Paul Wolfowitz argue forcefully in favor of it.

In an interview with the *London Sunday Telegraph* (March 18), Rumsfeld declared that he no longer saw "the ABM treaty as having a central role in strategic stability." Yet unilateral abrogation by the United States—necessary in order to proceed with NMD—would destabilize our relations with Russia, China, and probably Europe. Even so, the president, according to Rumsfeld, "intends to deploy missile defense." Furthermore, it would not be the limited land-based system supported half-heartedly by the Clinton administration. Wolfowitz speaks glowingly of a multi-layered system: "the best thing is to attack a missile several different ways....If you have a problem with one system, another system may work better." In other words, let's plump for a multi-system failure.

"I'm part of a Rapid Bewilderment Force—
I fail to understand events as soon as they've happened."

And why must we do this? Rumsfeld argues: "There is a good deal of [nuclear] proliferation," and calculates that "any number of countries has the ability to acquire weapons of mass destruction and the ability to deliver them." Any number? No, probably no more than four or five. A nice number for arms negotiators and diplomats to get to work on.

Instead, military thinking and cold-war attitudes are rapidly shaping the emerging core of the Bush administration's foreign policy. We will wind up arming the Iraqi opposition and create another set of outlaws like the Taliban. We will not employ NATO military force in Macedonia where it could avert a major regional war. We will deploy NMD and derail a working arms-control agreement—an agreement that should be built upon, not dismantled. In other words, our relations with other nations, friend and foe alike, will be put to the service of a missile defense that is, so far, unworkable and quite possibly unnecessary.

Sounds like Fortress America to us, and for this, you don't need diplomats. You hardly need a foreign policy.

ET CETERA

Anyone here named Richard Cohen? ■ Pius XII's response to the Nazi extermination of the Jews is a notoriously contentious issue. In publishing Richard Cohen's positive review of two scholarly books criticizing Eugenio Pacelli ("Pius XII: Not Vindicated," March 9), we expected to receive letters and complaints. Fair-minded people can disagree about Pacelli's motives, the extent (if any) of his culpability, and the effectiveness of his actions. What we didn't expect to get was a phone call from Richard Cohen—Richard Cohen, the feisty columnist of the *Washington Post*—complaining that people were attributing the review to him. What could we say?

For the record, our Richard Cohen is *not* the *Washington Post*'s Richard Cohen. Nor is he the Richard Cohen who wrote *Housing Trust Funds in New Jersey*, or the Richard Cohen who penned *The Love Drug: Marching to the Beat of Ecstasy*. Nor is he the Richard Cohen who lives on Ocean Parkway in Brooklyn or the Richard Cohen who lives just down the street here on Riverside Drive. Our Richard Cohen happens to be an Englishman who recently moved to New York and was for years a contributor to the London *Tablet*. Even more interesting, his father was once a contender for the United Kingdom's heavyweight boxing title. We met our Richard Cohen in the summer of 1999, when he called on us to discuss John Cornwell's *Hitler's Pope*. At that time he was writing a piece on Pius XII for a certain prestigious national magazine. We were impressed with his skepticism about Cornwell's book and his evident willingness to weigh the evidence on both sides of this difficult question. His response to his critics appears on page 29.

But for the record, he is not the Richard Cohen of Michigan Avenue in Chicago or the Richard Cohen of Sutter Street in San Francisco or the...

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OF SEVERAL MINDS

JO McGOWAN

LYRICS TO LIVE BY

What my children are listening to

My teenagers love music. Anand's taste runs to Aerosmith, Moby and Bon Jovi, while Cathleen prefers Savage Garden and the Backstreet Boys. The tapes are almost as available in India, where I live, as in Boston or Brooklyn. Both of them would have this music on full blast, twenty-four hours a day if it were permitted. It isn't, but it might as well be the way their songs work their way into my brain and stay there. I know that from generation to generation, it is the responsibility of parents to despise the music their children love, but I don't. I often actually like it. The beat is strong, insistent. It makes me want to move, or at least sing along. But then I listen to what I am singing and I realize it's the lyrics I can't stand.

And unfortunately, the lyrics are what I carry around with me. It is disturbing. I have always thought that I was a person of some depth, but lately whenever I pause to listen to what is going on in my head, I hear things like "My friend's got a girlfriend and he hates that b—"or, "Come on, leave me breathless, can't fight this feeling..." Even if one consciously rejects the messages of free sex, hatred, and violence that so many of these songs celebrate, the cumulative effect of repeating them over and over and over the way one does with a catchy tune must be considerable.

It was with this in mind that I began a little music therapy for myself. I banned the children from playing their tapes on the car stereo and began listening exclusively to Handel's *Messiah* while driving. I was amazed at how quickly it filled my thoughts and how appropriate certain songs can be when played at just the right moment.

One very hot morning, for example, I was driving through the town's most congested area (the road there narrows precipitously—the locals call it "Suicide Alley"), weaving the car through a maze of buffalo carts, bicycles, trucks, buses, rickshaws, cows, and hand-pulled carts when suddenly the voice of the tenor rang out: "He was cut off from the land of the living, for the transgressions of thy people was he stricken." And the next moment, the consolation: "But thou didst not leave his soul in hell, nor didst thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption."

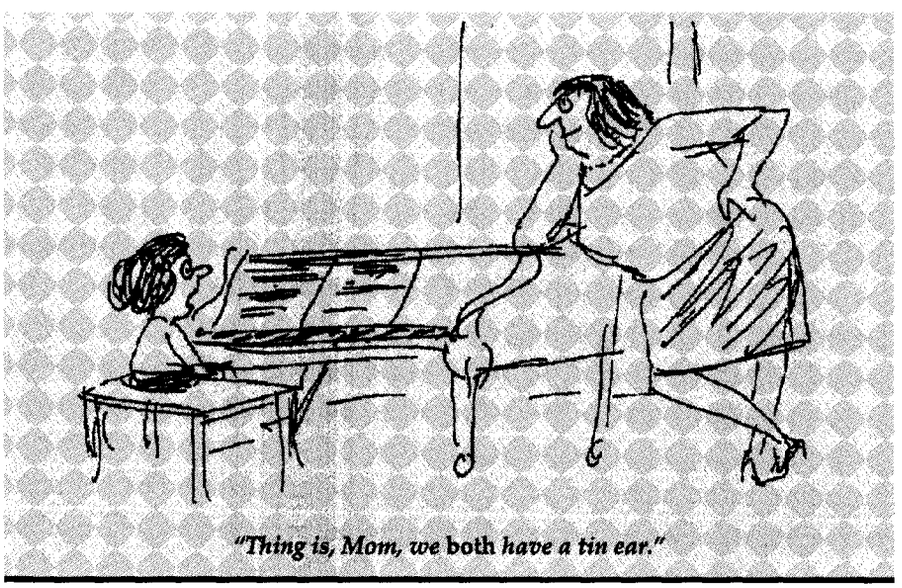
Seeing it like this in black and white, without the gorgeous voice or the stirring music, I can hardly believe how moved I was when I heard it or how comforting that assurance was, creeping through Suicide Alley—hell indeed in 110-degree heat. Over the next month I listened to the whole oratorio many times, and each session revealed something new.

Hearing Jesus described as "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" brought me close to tears. I think it was the final *s* in sorrows, more than anything else, that made me realize, as I never had before, his humanity. Not sorrow in the abstract, but sorrows, individual hurts and sadnesses. And the choice of the word "acquainted"! How mild, how sweet a word to describe the terrible suffering he had experienced in his life.

Kiri Te Kanawa is the soprano in the recording I have, and the first time I heard her sing "I know that my Redeemer liveth" I felt that if I could just go on hearing it I would never have a doubt of its truth—for it is impossible not to believe in the atmosphere her voice creates. I suppose I must have read all these passages at some point or other. But set to music, emphasized, repeated by voices almost unbearably beautiful, they become majestic and stirring, powerful enough to change a life.

It is a sharp drop back to earth to walk into the house and hear one or the other of the children's favorite songs reverberating from their rooms. I know I listened to stuff my parents disapproved of when I was growing up (one of my favorite songs was the forbidden "Cecilia" by Simon and Garfunkel—I loved the risqué reference to "making love in the afternoon"), but from what I can recall, there was nothing truly dreadful.

That is not true today, but there are two things which give me comfort. One is the recitative right at the end of *Messiah* which promises us "we shall be changed in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet." And the other is that I still control the music in the car. □



"Thing is, Mom, we both have a tin ear."

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WILLIAM PFAFF

THE BALKANS BOIL OVER

The U.S. ties NATO's hands

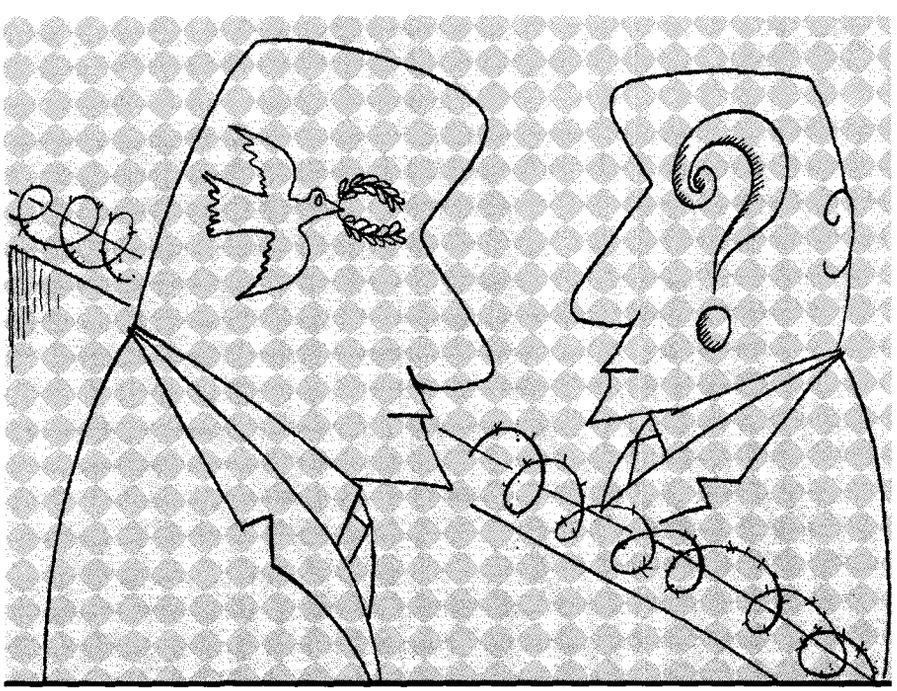
One can debate the merits of interventionist versus noninterventionist foreign policy, but the worst policy of all is one that makes promises it fails to keep, backing off when things become difficult. Exactly this, on the part of Washington, underlies the serious crisis of interethnic fighting in Macedonia.

Albanian guerrilla forces have taken advantage of NATO's occupation of Kosovo to launch themselves into Serbia and Macedonia. Doing so, they profited from a short-term decision by Washington to sponsor attacks into Serbia as a way of undermining Slobodan Milosevic.

Now that Milosevic has been overturned by conservative and constitutionalist leaders in Serbia, the Albanian guerrillas—unchecked and emboldened by Washington's noninterventionism—have become instigators of war in Macedonia, as well as obstacles to political reconstruction in Serbia.

Three years ago, for the action-minded in Washington, backing the Kosovo Liberation Army seemed a good idea. The NATO allies were not so sure about this, but Washington prevailed. After NATO's occupation of Kosovo, the United States encouraged KLA militants to set up in the so-called buffer zone in southern Serbia, largely Albanian-populated, where Serbian army forces were prohibited. The guerrillas attacked Serbian police and demanded the region's reunification with Kosovo (from which it was separated only in the 1950s).

It was easy for them to move clandestinely from there into the adjoining Albanian-populated part of Macedonia, whose territorial integrity the United States has formally guaranteed. No one blocked them, even though there was a sharp dispute between the United States and London over Britain's call for aggressive NATO patrols inside the buffer zone to check the guerrillas. The Pentagon has formally limited the U.S. Army's role to peacekeeping inside Kosovo.



The United States even vetoed NATO protection for thirty European Union monitors. They were meant to observe a limited Serbian army movement back into the buffer zone, authorized to block access to Montenegro. "There is no guarantee the Serbs are going to behave," an American official explained, as if assurance of good behavior were not the point of such an exercise.

Washington says that it wishes to preserve its "credibility" with the Albanians. In fact, it is appeasing Albanian extremists. A factor in the situation is that the guerrillas are blackmailing Washington. They, or extremists among them, know that if the United States turns against them, they can provoke a major crisis between Americans and NATO allies, and profit from what follows.

The scenario would involve killing enough U.S. soldiers to provoke the Bush government and Congress into pulling American troops out of the Balkans. It is a reckless scenario, dangerous for all concerned, and possibly fatal to NATO. But it is plausible.

The Western powers went into the Balkans to stop ethnic cleansing, not to sponsor guerrillas set upon creating new ethnic states. They aimed to support liberal, nonethnic government, or at least to defend a liberal society in the place where it still existed in the early 1990s, in Sarajevo.

For an ethnic community to want to live inside its own national borders is a legitimate choice, so long as this is not at the expense of others. No one would have objected to Yugoslavia's breakup if it could have been accomplished without war. There was war, and the Yugoslav people (who have nothing but history to set them apart) have individually and belligerently segregated themselves.

The Albanians were the people left out. They have not, until now, been warmakers. The Kosovo Albanians practiced nonviolence under heavy Serbian repression, demanding only to be treated as equal citizens, which they mostly had been until Slobodan Milosevic took power.

The Albanians in Macedonia have

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wanted a binational state that would also grant them equality with the Slav population. An Albanian party is currently part of a coalition government and holds five cabinet posts, including the ministry of justice; but the civil service, education, and official treatment of the Albanians remain heavily weighed against them. The resulting popular resentment fuels the crisis that has now been provoked by the guerrillas.

None of these Albanians seem eager to become part of backward, impoverished, mafia-ridden Albania itself. The Kosovars consider Kosovo the natural center of any ethnic Albanian nation.The situation is not hopeless. The new Serbian government proposes serious compromises to reconcile the Kosovars to autonomy within the federation. The European Union offers future membership, in which the narcissistic particularisms of the former Yugoslavia might become increasingly irrelevant.

The Albanians are entitled to whatever future they can peacefully negotiate. Their desire for autonomy and unity is widely understood. They can have plenty of support from the international community in negotiating their problems with their neighbors.

The main thing is that NATO insists that violence is unacceptable. NATO's intervention in the Balkans makes no sense if it cannot prevent more ethnic violence. NATO is there, with overwhelming force and enormous resources. It can stop the violence. The United States holds the key to what NATO does. As matters stand, it is failing its responsibility. □

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David K. O'Rourke

QUARRIED STONES

And other spiritual facts

Urbs Jerusalem
Beata dicta pacis visio
Quae construitur in caelis
Vivis ex lapidibus...

The vespers hymn from the liturgy of the consecration of a Catholic church, one of the oldest surviving Latin liturgies, speaks of the blessed city Jerusalem being built of living stones. To describe the church as made of "living stones," when the business at hand is the consecration of a church newly built of quarried stones (at great cost and effort, no less), may seem to involve some ambivalence. But there is neither ambiguity nor ambivalence. What we sense in this hymn, and in the entire rite of church consecration, is metaphor. It is metaphor the way the church itself is metaphor, a far-reaching image that includes the concrete, the human, the supernatural, and the divine. The church is buildings, it is people both living and dead, it is the heavenly host, and it is God. It is all these united through that most extraordinary belief which lies at the very heart of Christianity—the belief that the Word has become flesh.

I am daily reminded of the importance of our human flesh to all I believe. For I am writing this in Eastern Europe, in Lithuania's capital, Vilnius, where the signs of tyranny and occupation are still so visible. Yet the human reality that is the church has endured in part because the monuments of past Christian life have endured. Consecrated stones remembered when the fear and distress of daily life under Hitler and Stalin made remembering too painful. The stones stood watch when flesh and blood could not.

I write this in a glassed-in café in the old city. The rainy end of the cold gray clouds flying across the sky has caught me unawares and driven me to seek shelter. So I sit impatiently, tormenting the bottom of my tea cup and hoping that the distant blue will determine the remainder of the day. Yet even with cold rain streaking the window I see how lovely this old city remains, and how tied it still is to the surrounding countryside. What were once country paths have long since been cobbled. The wall of unadorned house fronts following the street's curves bespeaks village realities more than urban pride.

Whatever the old city was like in past generations, today it is a visitor's delight, a colorful quarter with contemporary charm, built on centuries of life. It is also built on seventy thousand Jewish deaths. Sixty years ago these streets were full of the tumult and clatter of life—a vibrant community, largely Jewish, whose principal public forum was the street itself. The Vilnius community was one of Europe's largest, a religious and cultural center for European Jews.

Today that community is gone. Soon after the Nazis oc-

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The Guess

He was learning so much from
his last illness, it was almost unbearable.
The wisdom of his body had been surfeit, the sinews
in an oak. And love was
at the roots.

And he guessed all men were
saviors—his hands extended to
the world his gratitude. And they seemed
empty, the fullness
invisible.

Jane Mayhall

cupied the city in 1941, they began arresting the Jewish population and, over the course of ninety days, took half the arrestees to a forest ten miles out of town, shot them, and dumped them into mass graves. The remaining thirty-five thousand were then shut up in a newly created walled ghetto until 1943, when they, too, were killed.

More than a people disappeared. An entire culture with a hundred synagogues, and printing houses, libraries, and schools also disappeared. The main synagogue, a sixteenth-century monument with a renowned library, one of the finest in the world, was destroyed. So famous was this institution, and so vital the community, that the leaders of the early-twentieth-century renaissance in Jewish linguistics chose Vilnius as the site for a new institute for the study and propagation of the Yiddish language. All this was destroyed. Everything distinctively Jewish was destroyed. And what the Nazis left in ruins, the Soviets later reduced to rubble and carted away, so that not even a trace would be left.

Today, beyond shops and pastel-colored houses on Zyda Street is a park about the size of a playing field. It is bounded on the far side by a Soviet apartment block. The perimeter is planted with linden trees. On one end, one sees, in fact, a small, dingy Soviet-era school far along in the process of falling apart, a basketball court, and a few wooden and plastic jungle gyms for small children. Despite the raw look of the four-story apartment block that replaces the actual wall that the Nazis built in 1940 to create the ghetto, the trees, bordered paths, and open space create a soft and gentle look. There is no indication that this field was once a religious and cultural center for millions of Europe's Jews. The people are gone, and so too the very stones of the Great Synagogue that once stood here.

A mere half-mile away, on the eastern side of the old city, abutting wooded hills that form so much of this still-rural country, stands the boarded-up shell of a once-elegant baroque monastic church. Mismatched sections of rusting iron fence seal it off from the street. Behind the church, occupying a city block, is the even more decayed monastery itself. Missing roof tiles expose its supporting beams, and in a few places the roof has collapsed. Where the monks' windows once opened onto the inner court, squares of brick-rimmed blackness peer blindly from the stucco walls.

The lightness of the high church's lines and the details of its rococo tower still evoke the sounds of Mozart, despite the grimness of decay. Today its only visitors are the ravens flying in and out of the monastery windows; its only life the weeds growing in the littered field behind the church where Augustinian monks once tended roses.

Here, too, there is no one, no human presence. Just a ruin. But, unlike the school yard where the Great Synagogue once stood, here there is a ruin—one both beckoning and accusing. Whether it points to Nazi brutality, Soviet oppression, or, given the advance of the decay, the anti-Catholic policies of Czar Alexander III, it still points accusingly at an oppressor. And it beckons to the restorers who, year by year, move closer to the edge of the old city.

The monks are gone. The czars and the Nazis and the Soviets are gone. The worshipers are gone, at least from this church. Yet the stones still stand and the stones remember. They stand in desolation but they endure, unexploited. They rise in ruin, but it is a ruin that still tells of life. For in their decay and isolation they still remind us that once, many years ago, they were consecrated, set aside for a sacred use they still painfully proclaim.

I look at the ruin, and I recall the words of confreres who tell me that our church has no need of stones. The God of the living, they tell me, has no need for memories of the dead.

It may be so. But there are the seventy thousand people who once filled these streets with their bustle. Their painfully few survivors are determined that they be remembered with nothing less permanent than granite to record their dates and their numbers and the events that destroyed them and their world.

Yet the living, some confreres insist, need not be mindful of quarried stones. Maybe. If in the lightness of their perceptions they see nothing of note to record, then perhaps nothing enduring is required. But if somehow (in some way I cannot and do not want to understand) the finger of God touched that time, and if in some way those lives have permanence, then they merit a record. Even we with our presumed security, our continuity simply presupposed, do not wish our graves to be marked by paper or straw. For there seems no judgment upon the dead that is more cruel or contemptuous than the belief that their passing merits no note. □

David K. O'Rourke, O.P., *is a senior fellow at the Santa Fe Institute, Berkeley, California.*

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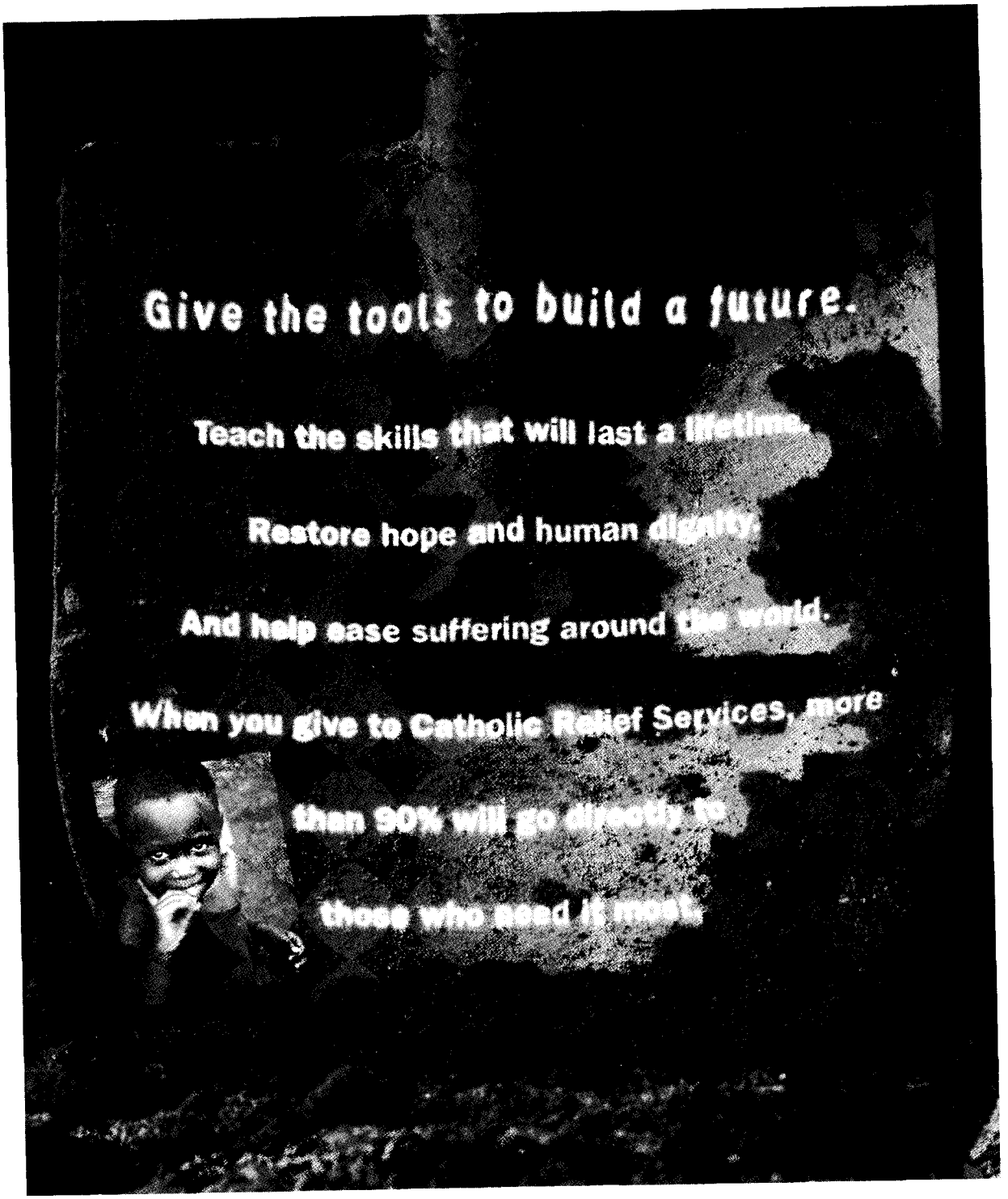
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CONTENDING WITH LIBERALISM

Some advice for Catholics

William Galston

What follows is an edited version of remarks by political philosopher William Galston made to a colloquium sponsored by Commonweal *on "Catholic Social Thought and Liberal Pluralism." The colloquium is part of a project, titled "American Catholics in the Public Square," funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts. One of the project's central interests is the relationship between Catholic social thought and political liberalism.*

In the hope of exploring that relationship more fully, Commonweal *asked Galston to contribute his reflections on the following proposition and accompanying questions: While Catholics have obviously worked out practical compromises with the liberal pluralism that has come to shape all aspects of American society, it is unclear whether Catholic social thought uses a moral vocabulary and indeed assumes a whole mindset alien to most Americans, including many Catholic Americans. Catholic social teaching seems to offer a comprehensive idea of the good and puts forth a vision of a harmonious social and political order. Liberalism eschews such comprehensive visions, is agnostic about the nature of the good, and accepts conflict and competition as more or less permanent, often productive features of society.*

Where and to what extent does the Catholic tradition tend to mesh or clash with the various conceptions of liberal pluralism? Where can these traditions fruitfully engage each other? Where do certain aspects of one tradition or the other make cooperation unlikely or impossible? THE EDITORS

I speak as someone who has gone through his own version of the experience of political homelessness, a sense of alienation from my own political party that many progressive pro-life Catholics talk about. I have spent the better part of two decades trying to remedy that situation within the Democratic Party. My counsel to Catholics is, go thou and do likewise. It is not easy. But wishing won't make it happen. To political problems there can only be a political remedy. To make the Democratic Party more responsive to Catholic social concerns will require that you really grapple with the very large changes occurring in society, the sorts of change that make any simple return the Democratic Party politics of the 1940s and 1950s impossible.

The politics of the 1940s and 1950s reflected the society and the economy and culture of the times, and those times are gone forever. The practical question is, how can the kind of moral understanding that Catholics found so attractive in that iron triangle of the Catholic church, the Democratic Party, and the labor unions be recreated in a manner that is appropriate to new circumstances? To deal with that question, several other questions must be raised and answered.

- How can a politics that was originated on behalf of an industrial working class be translated and updated for a new population where the growth sector is an upper-middle class based on the information economy? Demographic changes in American society point to an enormous shift in the past thirty years toward this new upper-middle class as the dominant force in American society and politics.
- How does Catholic social thought engage this new class?
- How does Catholic social thought deal with the dramatic shift in American social institutions away from notions of solidarity and toward expressive individualism?

The institutions characteristic of the 1940s and 1950s were

"I'm sorry to say you're not a knee-jerk anything."

William Galston *is professor at the School of Public Affairs and director of the Institute for Philosophy and Public Policy at the University of Maryland. One of the nation's leading political philosophers, he is the author of* Liberal Purposes *(Cambridge) and* Justice and the Human Good *(University of Chicago). A longtime activist in the Democratic Party, Galston served as deputy assistant for domestic policy under President Bill Clinton, 1993–95. Professor Galston's full paper can be found at: www.catholicsinpublicsquare.org.*

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hierarchical and embodied principles of authority. The deconstruction of hierarchical institutions so characteristic of our age raises interesting questions, not only for a hierarchical church but also for a form of politics that looks back nostalgically to a concatenation of authoritative institutions that is no longer sustainable.

I don't have an easy answer to those questions. In this regard, however, Alan Ehrenhalt's wonderful book *The Lost City* (HarperCollins, 1996) is an essential text. One of the three exhibits is Ehrenhalt's bill of particulars about the decline of so-called machine politics and the blue-collar Catholic neighborhood. If you ask what has been lost in the lost city, or what's the most important thing that's been lost, the answer is the idea of authority that constituted those institutions and society as a whole.

What is a sustainable idea of authority in contemporary circumstances? I'm not sure I know what the answer is, but I am sure what the answer isn't. Social thought seeking an answer to that question must stand in the closest possible conjunction with empirical sociology. It must also be steeped in empirical political science and empirical economics (if there is any), as well as empirical psychology. We need to understand why the understanding of authority or the practice of authority characteristic of the 1940s and 1950s has eroded. The acceptance of authority was related to very practical needs for goods—jobs, housing, sustaining urban working-class life—which only a certain kind of authority could provide. That practical need has diminished as a result of economic change and because of public assistance programs. Individuals are less dependent on both political machines and churches. In the eyes of those who benefited from them, the older institutions have become less and less necessary. For example, aid is no longer funneled through the parish priest, or jobs through the ward committeeman. Our practical understanding of authority in modern circumstances has to be correlated with the concrete needs of people and how those needs can be satisfied under modern circumstances.

This challenge is made all the greater by the fact that in cultural matters we have moved increasingly toward what I call the "high-choice society." On the theoretical level, Americans increasingly embrace an expansive notion of personal autonomy. On the practical level, that idea of autonomy becomes a hyper-expansive notion of individual choice, which is the closest thing to an inviolable norm that now exists in American culture. How does Catholic social thought engage this standard notion of individual choice and the concept of markets and capitalism that goes along with it? Catholic social theorists have to approach the new market forces more carefully and with greater understanding and precision. A simply moral engagement with an empirical phenomenon is not going to be very productive. A Catholic empirical economics must be developed.

In short, there's a big distinction between embracing the proposition that man does not live by bread alone and not bothering to learn how a bakery operates in the modern world. There are new and improved ways of baking bread that make bread more available, more cheaply to more people. Without convicting myself of neo-liberalism, I think it's important for Catholic social thought, having figured out how to engage productively with things such as representative democracy and modern notions of freedom of conscience, to work out an equally nuanced response to the modern market. A rejectionist stance won't work. It didn't work in the nineteenth century, and it won't work now. In my judgment, Catholic social thought has a lot of work to do in that area. The categories of Catholic social thought can provide good frames, but those frames must be filled in with serious analysis—if I may be so bold, a much more serious economic analysis than the bishops undertook in preparing for and issuing their 1986 letter on the economy. As far as I was concerned, that letter was a weak contribution to public dialogue and deservedly neglected.

Similarly, the Catholic social critique of the American economy and political system ought to consider very carefully the relationship between the grounding commitments of the church's teaching on the one hand, and the appropriate shape of a public welfare system on the other. I could make an argument that done right, pro-work welfare reform is more consistent with the dignity of the person than what it seeks to replace. A lot of Catholic social theorists adopted a stance of reflexive, knee-jerk opposition to welfare reform. But welfare reform was going to happen, and some more inventive thinking on the part of Catholics would have been helpful.

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The appropriate response of Catholic social thought *vis-à-vis* the new global economy and the role of the state in that economy is a very complicated question that requires a great deal more thought. Though "New Democrats" such as myself identified with the need for economic growth, it is not our position that the state shouldn't interfere with the market. Rather, we believe that as the economy changes, the form of the most appropriate and effective engagement of the state with the economy must also change. In some ways, the new economy drives toward a logic of greater state involvement rather than less. Let me give you just one example. It may be the case that economic trends over the next twenty years will put a great deal of pressure on the ability of employers to provide health care for their employees. If I'm right about that, the role of the state in provision of health care will increase dramatically. New Democrats are not opposed to that; it's just a question of how best to do it.

On cultural issues, liberal orthodoxy on abortion, gay rights, and the absolute separation of church and state are especially neuralgic points in the dialogue with Catholicism. Recently, for example, an evangelical Christian society at Tufts University was disenfranchised by the university because it would not accept in its leadership a person who openly declared herself bisexual. That is a good example of what I call "exclusionary liberalism" or "liberal imperialism." I am involved in a bipartisan interfaith group that's trying to engage the question of gay rights and traditional religion. Of course, the fact that Tufts is a private university creates a different sort of constitutional and legal frame for discussion. But from the standpoint of a morally defensible understanding of liberalism, Tufts should not be in the position of, in effect, denying certain groups fundamental rights of association. I predict that as liberals think this one through they will come to the conclusion that Tufts and other universities are making a big mistake in telling associational groups what they must think or how they must organize themselves. The leading Supreme Court cases are clear on this point. To define the leadership of a voluntary organization is to define the soul of that organization. To tell the Boy Scouts or an evangelical club who can lead them is in effect to abolish the association. I think that's a simple case theoretically, although it may turn out to be a hard and bitter one politically.

To define the leadership of a voluntary organization is to define the soul of that organization. To tell the Boy Scouts or an evangelical club who can lead them is in effect to abolish the association.

But theoretically and practically, the fact for Catholics to attend to is that there are some responsible liberal voices with whom many of these questions can be productively discussed. Let me be specific. Many of these conflicts revolve around the use of state mechanisms—and not just state mechanisms, but other institutions—to impose liberal norms on communities that are in disfavor. I speak as a liberal theorist here, when I say that liberals are almost always making a mistake even in their own terms when they do this. It's important for Catholic social thinkers to understand that not all liberals are comfortable with liberal imperialism. Many of us believe that we're violating our own principles in such situations. If you ask me, "Is it a good idea for public law to force Catholic hospitals to accept abortions contrary to the conscience of individual doctors and frequently contrary to the policies of the institutions?" my answer is no.

As a member of the Clinton administration, when I had any say at all in the laws and regulations tending in that direction, I tried to resist them. I did so not simply for prudential political reasons, although the Democratic Party is now in trouble with Catholic voters. More important, there is a principled liberal justification for defending Catholic hospitals and Catholic doctors in the face of public law that would coerce them on questions of conscience and public dispute. Everybody should understand that principle. For example, public laws that force individual homeowners to rent basement apartments to gays are wrong. There's a fundamental distinction in liberal political philosophy between the public and the private. The boundary of that line will always be contested, but to abolish that line is to betray liberalism's basic commitments. Any doctrine that says that everything is actually or potentially public is an antiliberal doctrine. Therefore fair housing laws have always distinguished in some rough-and-ready way between public accommodations and private dwellings. How one defines and acts upon that distinction is a complex matter, but no public housing law that I know of would declare a basement apartment in an individual's home a public accommodation.

On the question of aid to Catholic schools, I think it is possible to say yes, but carefully and with qualifications. The Supreme Court is steering back toward the view that when done with care, public aid to parochial schools within the framework of general public purposes is to be welcomed. Al Gore, as you know, startled a number of people in his own party during the presidential campaign when he made a major speech not only endorsing the principle of "charitable choice" but also favoring its expansion.

Some liberals are absolutely closed-minded on the issue of the relationship betweem faith communities and public purposes. But I can tell you, as someone who was part of the dialogue leading up to Gore's speech, that this is not a hopeless dialogue. I speak as someone who took a great deal of heat when I published an article about five years ago recommending a carefully monitored national voucher experiment.

Finally, I know how affronted not only conservative Catholics

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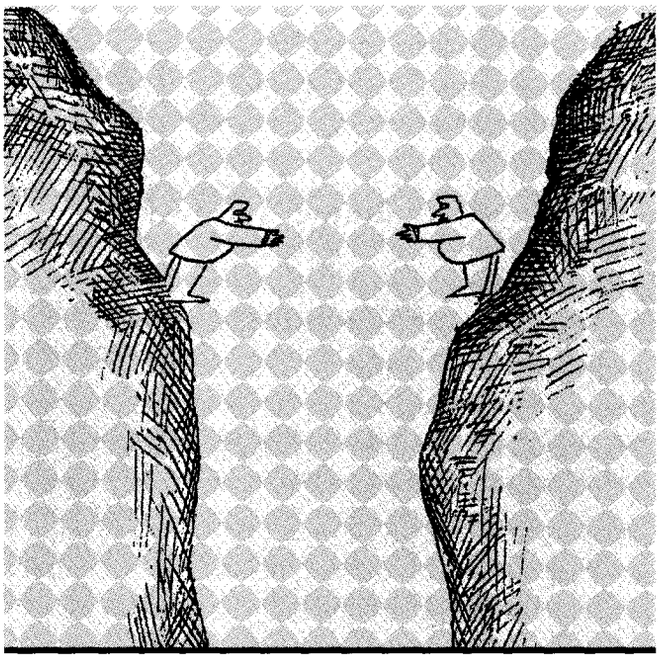
but also moderate and liberal Catholics feel by the exclusionary stance of the Democratic Party on the abortion question. Let me say frankly, I was horrified by the Democratic Party's treatment of Pennsylvania Governor Bob Casey at the 1992 Democratic Convention. I protested against it to no avail. I believe the Democratic Party has made a serious and indeed historic mistake in turning *Roe* v. *Wade* into a litmus test for party leadership. I can't say it any more flatly than that. Regrettably, I do not expect this to change any time soon. But there are people in positions of leadership in the party who believe it was a mistake.

In conclusion, it is important to remember that the gap between Catholic social thought and liberal theory is much narrower than it was in the mid-nineteenth century, or even in the mid-twentieth. Catholicism has made its peace with constitutional democracy, individual rights, freedom of religious conscience, and the separation of church and state. At the same time, liberals are less inclined than they once were to emphasize self-interest at the expense of moral motivation, negative liberty at the expense of social justice, or rights to the exclusion of natural duties. Liberals are happy to reject "atomism" in favor of the social embeddedness of individuals—that is, as long as the social nature of personhood, as Catholic social thought conceives it, is not employed to deprive individuals of personal and political liberties.

Today, there is a real possibility that a fruitful dialogue and mutual learning can take place between liberal political and social philosophy rightly understood and Catholic social thought rightly understood. That judgment reflects my own particular theoretical and practical proclivities. I have never believed that the concept of rights made sense without the concept of responsibilities. I have never believed in the atomism that is sometimes ascribed to liberals. Liberal theory and liberal social philosophy can be construed in a way that most "liberal" Catholics would be pretty comfortable with them.

The terms of that engagement now have to be made more specific. Theoretically, it seems to me, it would make a lot of sense for Catholic social thinkers to grapple with the following issues:

- First, they should critique the expansive and unnuanced account of personal autonomy that is the long pole in a number of liberal theoretical tents these days.
- Second, Catholic social thought ought to grapple with what I've called "exclusionary" norms of public discourse. I'm thinking of controversies like those between the gay community and the Boy Scouts, and between abortion-rights advocates and Catholic hospitals that serve the public at large. I think it is extremely important to nail this one down, and to make common cause with liberals and people of goodwill around the proposition that an inclusive concept of public discourse allows people to say in public what they really believe, without being forced to filter their thought through a secular screen.



- Third, it's important for Catholic social thinkers to engage with forms of moral thought that are neither relativistic nor harmonistic. And there are such forms. In some of my recent writings I have concentrated on the moral thought of Isaiah Berlin, and what I've discovered is that there is a substantial contemporary movement of what might be called "value pluralism." Like Catholic moral thought, value pluralism holds that the distinction between good and bad or good and evil is objective and inscribed in the nature of things. But unlike Catholic moral thought, value pluralism holds that there is no single, binding, rationally compelling account of the hierarchy of goods leading to a *summum bonum*. I am increasingly inclined toward that plural objective view of the moral universe. I would suggest that such views are widely held among liberals and in the culture generally. What does Catholic social thought think about a form of pluralism that is both objective and nonhierarchical? How does that affect anything Catholics care about? I think that is worth thinking about.

Important differences remain, however. Some liberals embrace skepticism or relativism about the human good; some downplay the moral role of the state or seek to exclude faith-based arguments from public discourse; some emphasize the civic prerogatives of the state at the expense of family and associational autonomy. Clearly Catholics must reject these versions of liberalism. Liberals for their part must resist the use of theology and natural law as a basis of coercive state policy. It is one thing for Catholics, reasoning within the premises of their community, to reach conclusions about abortion, assisted suicide, and homosexuality that are held to be binding on the faithful; quite another to impose those views on others. Catholics may be affronted by a legal code that permits acts they view as abominable. But in circumstances of deep moral diversity, the alternative to enduring these affronts is even worse. □

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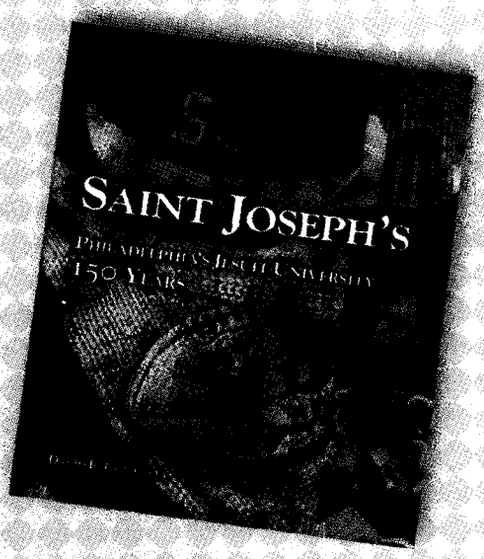

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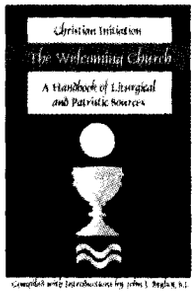

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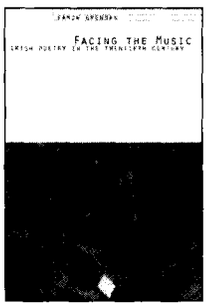

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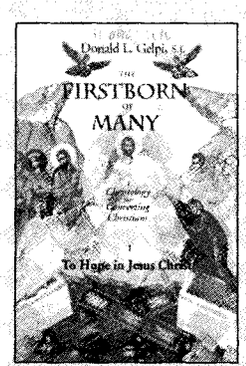

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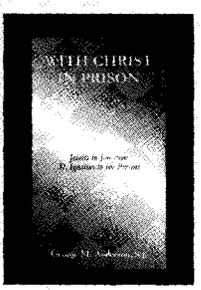

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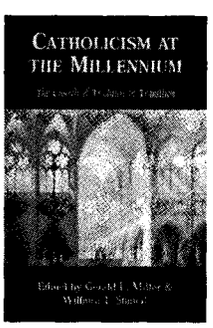

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Richard Alleva

AND THE OSCAR GOES TO...

A brief history of the statuette

In the 1960s and 1970s, shortly after Oscar night, the tonier movie critics such as John Simon would write articles scoffing at the choices of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Simon, in particular, would go right down the list, examining nearly every category and complaining that even the worthier winners were not really the worthiest.

This wasn't just a case of a few New York highbrows flaunting their refinement in reproach of Hollywood vulgarity. Practically everyone who really loved movies felt the same way back then. After all, these were the decades of Film as Art, Film as Fashion (Julie Christie and all those miniskirts), Film as New Morality (the stuff that Austin Powers now mocks), Film as the Voice of Rebellious Youth, Film as International Cinema Renaissance (even the Soviet bloc was part of it until the tanks rolled into Prague). So it seemed to me and to other young movie buffs that, when the statuettes went to *Patton* rather than *M*A*S*H*, to John Wayne (*True Grit*) instead of Dustin Hoffman (*Midnight Cowboy*), to *My Fair Lady* instead of *A Hard Day's Night*, America's most prestigious movie prize was being used by oldsters to keep American films staid, not to say arthritic. It wasn't merely that the spurned movies were addressed to a younger audience; they actually were more limber in technique and fresher in their responses to life. Seen nowadays, *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) still bubbles, *Dr. Strangelove* (1964) still cuts, and *My Fair Lady* (best picture of 1964) still creaks.

Furthermore, a perusal of the entire list of best-picture winners, from 1927 on, gives the impression that this top award was a tribute to plushness, not artistry. Of course, the further back you go, the worse the choices seem since the passing of decades brings out the innate seediness of second-rate entertainment. How could they have done it? the movie buff keeps exclaiming. Bad enough that *How Green Was My Valley* bested *Citizen Kane* in 1941 and *You Can't Take It with You* trounced *Bringing up Baby* in 1938. At least *You Can't Take It* is charming and *How Green* a decent weepie. But why choose *Cimarron* in 1931 over *City Lights*, a so-so western cum soap opera with only one memorable scene (the land rush), over Chaplin's greatest achievement, a movie so wisely funny that it evokes comparison not with other films but with the best moments in Cervantes and Molière? Time and again, perhaps two out of every three years, glossy mediocrities were honored. Why?

It is only when you take into account what Hollywood meant to the American people at the height of the studio system (the 1930s and 1940s) and how Hollywood perceived that audience, that you begin to understand what lay behind that stodginess, and may even begin to forgive it (but only if you feel in a forgiving mood), because that stodginess was the byproduct of a sort of noblesse oblige practiced by a pseudo-aristocracy.

It's a cliché to label Hollywood stars as our royalty, but a cliché isn't a lie. The studios cultivated their Gables and Garbos not primarily as acting talents (though some, of course, could act) but as cynosures, publicity garnerers, dream germinators. The studio bosses knew what made movies sell and they figured, correctly I think, that much audience daydreaming wasn't just sex-fantasizing about the stars but conjuration about the stories those stars enacted: visions of elegance, exciting work, exotic locales, noble self-sacrifice, dashing accomplishment. The people who lived out these fantasies had to be, in their many public appearances, well groomed, well fed, superbly coiffed and accoutered, appropriately mated (usually with another star), politically blank, sexually gleaming but ultimately housebroken, and as closely identified with a particular studio as Babe Ruth was with the Yankees. Gable and Garbo and Norma Shearer radiated the satiny ambiance of MGM, Jimmy Cagney's swagger encapsulated all the violence and grit of Warner Bros., and Tyrone Power's saturnine handsomeness animated the Rafael Sabatini bodice-ripping swashbucklers produced at 20th Century Fox.

What all these stars had in common was classiness, and the productions they were in had to be classy packages no matter what subject matter was wrapped within them. This is why MGM was the *echt* Hollywood studio of the first half of the century, its scripts adapted from nineteenth-century novels by Tolstoy and Dickens, its gowns by Adrian, and its sets by Cedric Gibbons. Its productions were slower and weightier than those of the other studios—they moved like great, majestic Percherons, fit for drawing the heavy cargo of Victorian plots. It was this stately, reassuring, not always exciting, instant-classic quality that was synonymous with high-quality moviemaking before 1960.

So it's no coincidence that MGM won a majority of the best-picture Oscars between 1927 and 1960, for the Academy Awards were the ultimate proclamations of classiness. The writing, directing, and (occasionally) acting awards could go to quirky talents, but the picture prize had to go to a Percheron. Orson Welles and Herman Mankiewicz could take home writing Oscars for *Citizen Kane* but there was no way that the modernistic *Kane* could challenge the four-square *How Green Was My Valley*, which looked and sounded like a nineteenth-century classic that had wandered into the twentieth. *City Lights* may be a comedy for the ages but the Little Tramp was too scrappy and too vulgar, too redolent of the streets to be rewarded with an Oscar. In 1942, Welles's *The Magnificent Ambersons* was shocking in its candid examination of what made an upper-middle-class Midwestern family tick. But since it laid waste to gentility

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while *Mrs. Miniver*, that tribute to British families enduring the Blitz, exalted gentility as a weapon against Hitler, which film do you think won the Oscar?

Of course, there were bound to be exceptions, most of them coming from the no-frills Columbia studio: *It Happened One Night, You Can't Take It with You, From Here to Eternity, On the Waterfront,* were all relatively inexpensive and unpretentious productions that won. But, for the most part, Hollywood was trying to honor those of its productions that pursued the notion of expensive-looking and classy-sounding entertainment for the masses.

Only now can I find something rather poignant in all this. With so much of its audience composed of immigrants and their children, with so many of its Depression customers struggling to survive economically, with so many people in the ensuing decade worrying about sons, fathers, and husbands in the war, and with so many survivors of that war buckling down to work in the late forties and fifties to win their portions of the new prosperity and upward mobility, Hollywood now seems to me a more benevolent dream factory than it did when I was an impatient little cineaste. Yes, the movie industry flattered and soothed and even occasionally lied, but I no longer sense any fascistic mind-control in all that, only an urge (a profitable urge, to be sure!) to fulfill the role of all minstrels: to keep the cold at bay by singing of romance and battle and beauty, to give the hard-pressed and the hard-bitten a bit of velvet. Most of the films that won the best-picture prize were promissory gestures that the velvet would continue to roll.

But that was then and this is now. Anything can win now, and that's been the case for the last twenty-five years. From the small-scale heroic grunge of *Rocky* to the huge-scale heroic boasting of *Braveheart,* from the intimate character studies of *Rain Man* and *Driving Miss Daisy* to the extravaganzas, *Titanic* and *The Last Emperor,* from old-fashioned weepies like *The English Patient* to the new-fashioned snideness of *American Beauty,* anything can win. Hollywood's current willingness to be open to any scale and texture is an index of its desperate need to find an audience. For where and what is the audience in an era when rich white middle-class teenagers walk around wearing expensive black headphones, playing gangsta rap that lets the world know that they are ready to die but only after they have offed a dozen cops; in a world where TV audiences are offered "reality" shows in which couples test their marital bonds by dating would-be seducers provided by a TV network? How talk of "the audience" at all in such an era? Isn't it really just bundles of appetites looking for fleeting satisfactions?

Who won at the last Oscars ceremony? You know. I don't, because I'm writing this piece three weeks before it happened. But I can't let that stop me from making a fool of myself. I bet *Traffic* won. It's big, slick, well acted (Bernicio Del Toro won as best supporting actor, right?), and its several plot lines are well juggled. But the main reason I think it won is that this movie deals with a problem the moviemaking town knows all too intimately: the drug trade. In recent decades, drugs have both powered and undermined the business of moviemaking, destroyed and advanced careers, and have made the storytelling of more than a few movies a lot hazier than would have been the case in the old factory system. In an era in which it is impossible to pin down what American audiences are or want, it's still possible to pin down one particular sub-audience that Hollywood can always empathize with: Hollywood itself. □

The Heart Has Its Reasons

Le coeur a ses raisons que la raison ne connaît point.
Pascal, *Pensées*

The heart has its reasons that the reason knows not of.
The heart in its season flows both blood and tears.
We are made to suffer that we may learn to love.

Where is the hidden hand that fits this worn old glove;
the hand that could dispel unreasoned fears?
The heart has its reasons that the reason knows not of.

Crushed between the push of time and callous shove
of unkind circumstance, suffocating through the years:
we are made to suffer that we may learn to love.

Within the tangled ganglia unwitting soul is wove.
Where's the soul's reason in that forest if no one hears?
The heart has its reasons that the reason knows not of.

Weep, then, or rage at the silence from above.
What moves in mystery may suffer other cares.
We are made to suffer that we may learn to love.

We're but the sum of all our terrors until we heart the dove.
Though we suffer for a reason, it's not what it appears.
The heart has its reasons that the reason knows not of.
We are made to suffer that we may learn to love.

Michael Baldwin

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Benjamin Ivry

CRIES FROM THE SCAFFOLD

Poulenc's 'Carmelites'

Later this month, veteran conductor Julius Rudel will lead performances of Francis Poulenc's 1957 *Dialogues of the Carmelites* at New York's Juilliard Opera Center. Rudel, now eighty, conducted a memorable Metropolitan Opera production some twenty years ago. Since that time, Poulenc's musical setting of the martyrdom of Carmelite nuns during the French Revolution, his masterpiece, has been performed and recorded repeatedly. It is a heart-wrenchingly dramatic setting, in the best tradition of Italian opera, although it is sung in French. It shows an uncanny gift for quicksilver characterization of the individual nuns, alternately fearsome, flighty, or faithful.

The opera follows the destiny of Blanche de la Force as she enters the cloister at Compiegne, painting a portrait in sound of the humble, neurotic heroine. *Dialogues* is a synthesis of romantic conventions and the psychological self-awareness of modern music. In act 1, for example, the First Prioress dies amid music of hysterical emotion, as in Italian opera, yet dignity and refinement are present throughout. Though the music is harmonious (which has led some listeners to underrate Poulenc's ingenuity), at dramatic moments it is fresh and raw. This is especially true in the composer's use of percussion to inspire fear, most unforgettably in the slicing, terminal sounds of the guillotine at opera's end. One feels that Poulenc really knew these women, and by the final curtain, the listener has come to understand them as well. For dramatic energy and verve, the best recording remains the 1958 EMI version.

Poulenc (1899–1963) was heir to a fortune from the pharmaceutical company Rhone-Poulenc. Still, his sybaritic life did not prevent him from creating the *Dialogues* as well as other works of spiritual vigor, such as the popular "Gloria," "Stabat Mater," and "Sept Repons de Tenebres." The sinuously attractive melodies in Poulenc's choral works, written for plush solo voices like soprano Leontyne Price, are what the French call "Saint-Sulpicien," after the glamorous, grandiose church in Paris's sixth arrondissement that was Poulenc's favorite. The composer commissioned the chic Parisian silversmith Puiforcat to create ritual objects as offerings of thanks for each of his major religiously themed works. He donated these to a shrine at the French pilgrimage site of Rocamadur, which may be visited today as the Musée-Tresor François Poulenc.

Dialogues des Carmelites had complex origins, which researcher Claude Gendre elucidates in a groundbreaking chapter in the recently published *Francis Poulenc: Music, Art, and Literature* (Ashgate Press). The French Carmelites' story was first transmuted into fiction by the German Catholic convert, Gertrud von le Fort (1876–1971), as *The Song at the Scaffold*. Georges Bernanos, author of *Diary of a Country Priest*, was asked to write dialogue for a 1947 screen version of von le Fort's story. The mortally ill Bernanos managed to complete the task, and posthumous stage productions of his "dialogues" were proposed, although exclusive theatrical rights had previously been assigned to Emmet Lavery (1902–86), an American lawyer and detective-story writer.

Lavery was also the founder of the National Catholic Theatre Conference (1937), and the author of widely performed plays such as *The First Legion* and *Magnificent Yankee*. Lavery described his own adaptation of von le Forte as having a "certain lightness of heart and a lightness of touch, which I do not find in the Bernanos treatment." He was well aware of literary rights and defended his agreements with von le Fort. In 1954, three years before Poulenc's opera was staged, a writer's arbitration tribunal in Paris ruled that the Bernanos family must pay damages to Lavery and include his name in all future productions of stage versions of *Carmelites*.

Unaware of this discord, in 1953 Poulenc had accepted *Dialogues* as a subject at the suggestion of the Italian music publisher Ricordi. Poulenc threw himself into the task, writing in a letter to a baritone friend that he was so taken with the project "I nearly called you Reverend Mother!" Poulenc's own health problems, intensified by hypochondria and coupled with the real illness of his lover, Lucien Roubert, made the creative process all the more difficult. By the end of 1953, with a good portion of the opera already composed, Poulenc first became aware of the copyright issues, and this complication weighed on him.

But in July 1954, a Father Griffin, a Carmelite from Dallas, Texas, learned of the opera project and wrote Poulenc: "I hasten to assure you that not only the Carmelite fathers of Dallas, but all the Carmelites in the United States—fathers, sisters, and brothers—are beginning a novena for you this week."

Moved by this letter, Poulenc found that the Lavery-Bernanos family issues were soon resolved. But the composer's personal life added drama when his lover Lucien died of pleurisy in 1955, confirming a principal notion from Bernanos's text that "we don't each die for ourselves, but some in the place of others." A sad and anguished survivor, Poulenc finished writing his opera at the time Lucien was dying in the next room.

Amid the turmoil, Poulenc achieved the dramatic intensity that has made *Dialogues* a lasting achievement. The singer Pierre Bernac recalled: "On certain evenings when he played his opera for friends, he would almost be in a state of trance." Generations of listeners have reacted in the same way to this spellbinding operatic creation. □

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Time stops for no mouse

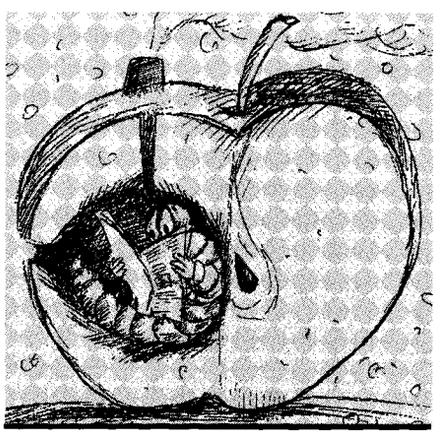
Daria Donnelly

Is there anything lovelier than discovering a really talented, even famous writer by chance? That just happened to me with the British novelist Leon Garfield. As I browsed a local children's bookstore, my eye was attracted to a cover, and then a stunning first sentence. I bought. I read. I read more. And then, as it happens, I heard about the jubilation in the children's book community: Garfield is back in print!

Although he wrote in the 1960s, Garfield's eighteenth- and nineteenth-century settings, and his plots charting the intersection of England's poor and her rising middle class, have made comparisons with Dickens inevitable. But not entirely helpful: the talents are different. Garfield is a master of terse telling. And of fantastically strained metaphors. In him the architectural structures of eighteenth-century literature blend well with the Romantic hyperbole of the nineteenth. Garfield's vision is moral, shaped by the questions of the age in which he lived.

Of the four novels republished this year, start with *Smith* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, paper $6.95, 195 pp., ages 9 and up) whose title character is a young London pickpocket. The book opens with Smith's capable pursuit of a disoriented country gentleman. Moments after he snatches the wallet, the old man is murdered. Concealed in the shadows, but not unobserved, Smith lingers long enough to learn that this is not a random killing: the murderers expected to find a document now held by the illiterate boy. A tense, book-length chase ensues. Along the way, big themes are sounded: the search for fathers; social deprivation; the mystery of inequity; and the difference, as articulated in the climax, between "justice and compassion." It's a tribute to Garfield's mastery and furtive wit that when Smith's protector proves to be a literally blind magistrate readers don't feel bludgeoned by an *important symbol*.

If the hairs on your head respond to *Smith*, turn to *Black Jack* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, paper $ 6.95, 197 pp., ages 9 and up) which opens at the Tyburn gallows where Smith so feared he would meet his end. There, a woman, pretending to be a widow, collects the bodies of her *faux* relatives and sells them to local surgeons for dissection. Only country folk in town for the day are duped into aiding her. Such is the case with young Bartholomew Dorking, whom the "widow" importunes to sit in her parlor with the executed murderer Black Jack, while she, unbeknownst to the boy, steps out to negotiate a price for such a promisingly large corpse. During this lonely vigil, the supposedly dead Black Jack rises. He compels Dorking to remove the pipe from his throat, stuffed there to cheat death. A daunting corpse, Black Jack alive is menace incarnate. At first, he stays with Bartholomew (whom he nicknames Tolly) of necessity and cruelty. But his motives shift as the young boy's goodness, fear, and loyalty begin to work on him. There is a romantic doubling of this plot in Tolly's courtship of an apparently insane girl who had been en route to an asylum when Black Jack overturned her carriage. (Her wealthy parents had nervously committed her to secure a sister's engagement to the local lord.) This book poses the most fundamental question: can love change people? You'll find Garfield's answer nuanced and hopeful.



The transforming quality of love, and its limitations, are center stage in Chris Lynch's new novel, *Gold Dust* (HarperCollins, $15.95, 196 pp., ages 10 and up). Set in an urban parochial school during the Boston busing crisis, the novel presents an uneasy friendship between Richard, a white twelve-year-old obsessed with baseball, and his new schoolmate Napoleon, a musically gifted Dominican cricket fan whose father has come to Boston to teach West Indian literature. Lynch remembers that Catholic schools in this troubled era became havens for white kids whose parents opposed busing. Napoleon is not the typical new student at Saint Colmcille's, and those who are menace him considerably. Richard has been at the school forever. He tries to dismiss the new race and class tensions by thinking of himself and Napoleon as the Gold Dust Twins, a local version of Red Sox heroes Fred Lynn and Jim Rice. Only occasionally is Richard aware that his dreams shove aside those of his friend. Lynch does a masterful job of showing how fleetingly the boys' love floats above, or gives them energy to fight against, the society in which they find themselves.

With the brief exception of Napoleon's father, the absence of understanding adults in Lynch's work will disturb some parents. But it rings true to current adolescents' social isolation (their sense of it; and the wayward license and wasting irrelevance it bequeaths them). Our cultural moment makes one positively

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long for the hopefulness of Leon Garfield's 1960s: that promise of cross-generational understanding he amply portrayed through historical portraits of young boys coming of age in the era before universal schooling.

If Garfield embodies the best hopes of the 1960s, Walter Brooks is the funniest herald of that era's communitarian and anti-authoritarian impulses. From 1927 to 1958 Brooks, an advertising man, book review editor, and onetime *New Yorker* staff writer, authored twenty-six Freddy the Pig novels. These are American classics, and Overlook Press has been steadily bringing them back into print with Kurt Wiese's fine original illustrations. This season's offerings are the 1930 Christmas confection, *Freddy Goes to the North Pole* (Overlook, $23.95, 305 pp., all ages) and the 1953 *Freddy and the Space Ship* (Overlook, $23.95, 260 pp.), one of Brooks's best. But you can start with any of the dozen now in print, or visit www.freddythepig.org to get some guidance from posted bibliographies, plot summaries, and opinions. There are a newsletter and T-shirts too.

What makes this beloved series so funny? Comic understatement. Pratfalls and predictable personality quirks. Brooks writes in a distinctively American style that looks both back and forward: he combines a gentle, rural humor with a subversive mockery that leaves no authority untouched. At the center of all the fun is a pig named Freddy, who lives on the Mr. and Mrs. Bean farm in upstate New York. Freddy writes poetry, solves crimes, edits a newspaper, is president and founder of an animal bank, helps establish the first animal republic, hosts Martians and teaches them how to play baseball. Oh, and he has time to be lazy too. In fact, one of the most charming things about the books is the bemused improvisations in which Freddy and Brooks engage. In the first half of the novel, Brooks typically sets up some grand plot only to lose the thread: then he, like Freddy, bumbles his way to the end.

There are other treats too. As in all good series, the stock characters of Freddy the Pig books feel as familiar as family. These include Jinx the cat, sister cows Mrs. Wogus, Mrs. Wurzburger, and Mrs. Wiggins (Freddy's detective partner), a bombastic rooster, an ironical owl, an evil rat and his gang, a loyal old horse, an untalented lady poetess, and the virtually speechless but radiantly good farmer Bean. The more of these books you read the better: it is that much funnier in *Freddy and the Space Ship* when Mrs. Peppercorn forces her way onto the Mars-bound rocket and pens horrible hymns to the red planet, if you recall her poetry contests with Freddy in *Freddy and the Dragon*.

Halfway through Michael Hoeye's *Time Stops for No Mouse* (Terfle, paper $12.95, 279 pp., ages 9 and up), I thought: Here could be a new Brooks. In this first novel, Hoeye has created a hilarious community of city-dwelling animals and an appealing hero, Hermux Tantamoq. By virtue of his honesty, dreaminess, and infinite capacity to lose nerve, the fastidious mouse watchmaker has much in common with Freddy. Hermux lives with his pet ladybug Terfle and by an ironclad routine, which includes daily coffee and donuts you can almost taste. When the fetchingly imperious mouse aviatrix, Linka Perflinger, fails to collect a watch she wanted repaired pronto, Hermux starts nosing around and stumbles into the dark side of a cosmetics industry hell-bent on finding the secret of eternal youth. Where Brooks takes comic aim at violators of the social contract—greedy captains of industry, flimflam men, cold warriors, and authoritarians of all stripes—Hoeye trains his guns on the foes of beauty in all its unpredictable and idiosyncratic glory: decorators, postmodern performance artists, body tuckers, cosmetic purveyors. If his targets seem right up to date with the current American *vanitas*, so does his style. The Depression-era Brooks wasted nothing. Hoeye tends to the extravagant: in names, scenes, typography (consider yourself warned), and in squandering characters who might have lived into future books. But long may Hermux wave: with a different font and an illustrator as fine as Kurt Wiese.

For edgy contemporary illustration, you won't do better this year than *Little Lit: Folklore & Fairy Tale Funnies* (RAW/HarperCollins, $19.95, 64 pp., all ages) edited by cartoonists Art Spiegelman and Françoise Mouly. Spiegelman is well known (even notorious) for his *New Yorker* covers and his award-winning Holocaust graphic novel, *Maus* (Pantheon, 1991). He and Mouly, his wife, have gathered sixteen European and American cartoonists and children's book artists to revive cartoon retellings of the old tales (Pogo's Walt Kelly provides a 1940s example from the *Fairy Tale Parade* comics). While some stay close to their story (David Mazzuchelli gorgeously illustrates the familiar Japanese story of fisherman Urashima Taro; Spiegelman turns his wit on a Hasidic parable), most provide campy addenda to, or arch commentary on, the tales (notably, William Joyce takes "Humpty Dumpty" as starting point for a fresh egg story, and, in her version of "Princess and the Pea," Barbara McClintock stresses the downside of the princess's hypersensitivity). A few offerings are probably too macabre for children, but even among those are revelations. Adult cartoonist Kaz's version of an appallingly circular Estonian tale about greed is outstanding. It finds a lighter comic double in Joost Swarte's brilliantly timed Danish tale, "The Leafless Tree." This collection is not for everyone, but I found it a big relief from the timidity now plaguing picture books.

In fact, I am overprepared to trust the mordant and subversive (but not the ironical) because of my belief that the rise of protective sentimentality in children's literature correlates with what has recently been called the "last taboo" in children's books, namely the prejudice against the subject of religion. Apparently, skittish publishing conglomerates fear the wrath of both secular, liberal consumers who think any mention of religion invites indoctrination, and conservative Christians looking for doctrinal offenses everywhere. With William Bennett the most visible purveyor of values and faith for kids, and parents suing states to remove *Harry Potter* from libraries because it's satanic, who can blame them?

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But I am starting to doubt my instinctive reach for those who gladly offend decorum and piety, and yet fearlessly pose the same big questions religion does. These writers do not present the only way to jump-start our sluggish sense of wonder. Sometimes they are dead wrong: British novelist Phillip Pullman, whose theodicy rage I have alternately praised and questioned in these pages (November 17, 2000), spent the autumn jetting around the United States on a book tour announcing that C.S. Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia* are "ugly and poisonous," and that Lewis's Christian vision caused him to write a series that "hates life." That is inane. Lewis's series is radiant with the love of this world. The simplest way you know this is that when you read it, you want to eat every single food mentioned: the lumps of butter, the creamy milk, the hot potatoes, even (a medievalist friend adds), the dirt that the trees enjoy.

So comes a lesson: even in our deaf age, a book engaged with the big questions need not be written in mordant, society-defying excess. Lewis's incarnational imagination still provides a resource, one which argues that a well-realized world is one on whose behalf we ask such questions. So, on to a few of the quieter works of such imagination this season.

Gloria Whelan's National Book Award-winning *Homeless Bird* (HarperCollins, 216 pp., $15.95, ages 10 and up) tells the story of a rural Indian girl, Koly, whose poor parents betroth her, sight unseen, into a family untroubled by her modest dowry. After a tense wedding ceremony, it becomes clear that her young husband is fatally ill, and that his parents sought the marriage only to get money for a healing trip to the Ganges river. He does not survive the journey, and Koly, following slave-like service to her new mother-in-law, is cast out into the homeless world of Indian widows. How she rebuilds her life—through her skills at embroidery, the chance kindness of a street boy, a visionary philanthropist, and lots of hard labor—composes the remainder of the narrative. What makes the book memorable is the counterpoint between the sounds and smells of relentless labor and the reticent, formal love that Koly extends not only to those around her but also to her inaccessible past.

Ian Falconer's Caldecott Honor book *Olivia* (Atheneum, $16, ages 3 to 7) is this season's most understated, and, at the same time, exuberant picture book. By limiting his colors to white, red, and shades of black, Falconer creates a restrained background for a very energetic young pig. Anyone who lives with a toddler will experience the shock of recognition. Others will be delighted to see the resources of high culture (most charmingly, Jackson Pollock) given a natural place in the lives of children.

The incarnational imagination need not find its only outlet in fiction. Diane Stanley's stunning *Michelangelo* (HarperCollins, $15.95, ages 8 and up) is the latest of her picture-book biographies. (Her other subjects are Elizabeth I, Joan of Arc, Leonardo da Vinci, Princess Ka`iulani of Hawaii, William Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, Cleopatra, Shaka: King of the Zulus, and Peter the Great). Though I admire many things about Stanley's narrative and visual artistry, I like best that she begins her stories with childhood and ends them with death. This allows young readers to identify with the subject, and also to see their own lives on a continuum. With *Michelangelo*, Stanley breaks new stylistic ground. Her decision to incorporate photographs of the artist's work into her own pictures has been controversial, but I think it is excellent. Children get a chance to see the art works in the context of their making rather than first encounter them as highly prized products. Watching the proud and prickly Michelangelo begin his glorious work on the Vatican's ceiling cannot but stretch a child's understanding of the heights to which our imperfect humanity can soar.

Finally, two books explicitly about religion: *Commonweal* contributor James T. Fisher has written a history of *Catholics in America* (Oxford, $22, 174 pp.) for Oxford's Religion and American Life series. Lively personalities and attention to Catholic influences on pop and political culture make this appealing for high school as well as college-age students. In *I Believe in Water*, Marilyn Singer collects twelve short stories by young adult writers, which chronicle what she calls "brushes with religion" (HarperCollins, $15.95, 279 pp., ages 12 and up). The book explores adolescent religious longing and doubt, the efforts of young people to integrate multiple religious heritages and to appropriate what seems best and true about the faith they have inherited. The title comes from Naomi Shihab Nye's beautiful, wry story, "What Is the Dickens?" in which a teenage girl sits with a dying grandfather. She struggles not only with his impending death but with his judgment that her religious faith is idiosyncratic and thin. Like the collection's best (I also recommend Gregory Maguire's "Chatterbox"), Nye's story does not impose religion on the material but lets it emerge naturally out of the drama. □

Daria Donnelly *is* Commonweal*'s associate editor.*

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A stay against inner anarchy

Words Alone
The Poet T.S. Eliot
Denis Donoghue
Yale University Press, $26.95, 326 pp.

Gregory Wolfe

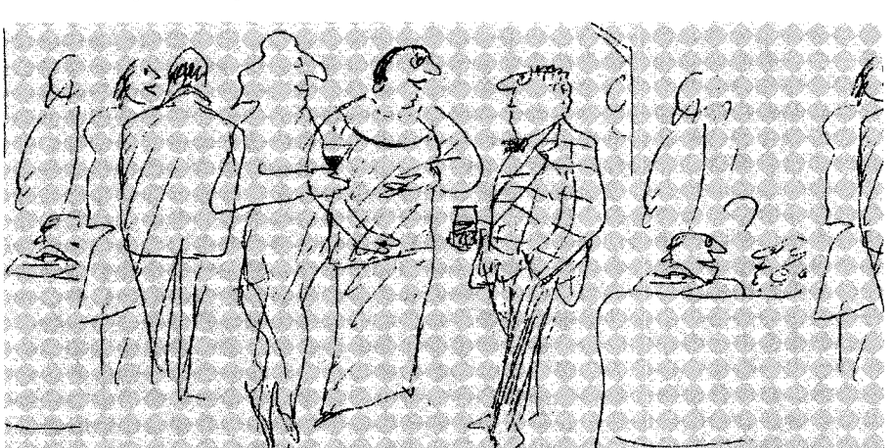
In 1990, Denis Donoghue published *Warrenpoint*, a marvelous hybrid of a book—part memoir of his Irish childhood, part collection of literary, philosophical, and theological musings. It helped to cement Donoghue's reputation as a literary humanist in a profession that has been dominated of late by theorists and ideologues. Donoghue belongs in the select company of critics like Frank Kermode and Christopher Ricks—scholars who have spent half a century crisscrossing the Atlantic, writing about literature with the unshakable conviction that words, for all their ambiguities and betrayals, are still capable of conveying meaning, and that we can still speak of authors as the creators of imaginative works that demand our respect and attention.

One of the many pleasures to be found in *Warrenpoint* is Donoghue's recollection of his Catholic upbringing, an extraordinary narrative of what was, by his account, a fairly ordinary childhood in the church. While his teachers at the Christian Brothers school were hardly paragons of scholarship or sanctity, neither did they traumatize young Donoghue. His faith survived intact, even after the buffeting and questioning of his university years, and has informed much of his mature criticism. For example, in *Ferocious Alphabets*, one of the most lucid books on postmodern literary theories, Donoghue brilliantly contrasts two types of reading: that which sees breath, voice, and personality behind the creation of literature and that which makes writing a play of language, without reference to an author. The former view, Donoghue argues, is underwritten by "the Christian tradition in which the primal creative principle is identified as the Word of God, God uttering Himself...." The essence of reading, he concludes, is "not to enlighten ourselves but to verify the axiom of presence: we read to meet the other."

But unless I'm mistaken, Donoghue's most recent books are addressing his faith more openly and extensively than ever before. *Warrenpoint*, which moved with ease from anecdotes about the Christian Brothers to reflections on Emmanuel Levinas's philosophy of "the other," contains one of the few defenses of the doctrine of Original Sin to be found in contemporary literary criticism. In the preface to *Words Alone*, Donoghue claims that he is writing a sequel to *Warrenpoint*, which ended just as he set off for University College, Dublin. To continue the story, he realized, required a new tack: the tale of his formative university years had to contract into a single protracted experience—his attempt to read and comprehend the works of T.S. Eliot. For a young Catholic in love with modern literature, Eliot was the central figure of the era; Donoghue set about becoming an apprentice to this master. In writing *Words Alone*, Donoghue wanted to look back at that experience and come to terms with the question: "What is entailed in submitting oneself to a writer?"

It's an intriguing question, but Donoghue never answers it, at least not directly. Despite the promise that the narrative will be not just about Eliot's poetry but "my experience in trying to read him," there is little autobiography in *Words Alone*. Aside from a few scattered references to the ways his peers were interpreting Eliot, this book is essentially a work of literary, cultural, and theological analysis. That his analysis is charged with the passion and precision refined by his lifelong conversation with Eliot is beyond doubt. But those expecting a straightforward sequel to *Warrenpoint* will not find what they're looking for.

Nonetheless, *Words Alone* is a timely, accessible, and courageous revaluation of Eliot—courageous because Eliot's rep-



"Mr. Trilby is an obscure poet."

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utation, which seemed unassailable for much of the twentieth century, has suffered a steep decline after being subjected to sustained attack over the last two decades. One of the first salvos in this campaign came not in the form of a scholarly monograph, but in Michael Hastings's stage play, *Tom and Viv* (later made into a film starring Willem Dafoe and Miranda Richardson). Hastings reinforced the old caricature of Eliot as a cold fish—a bloodless intellectual who took refuge from emotional chaos in religious dogma. Another, more serious line of attack, culminated in the publication of Anthony Julius's *T.S. Eliot, Anti-Semitism, and Literary Form* (1995). In a way, the allegations of Eliot's anti-Semitism share the premise of *Tom and Viv*: Eliot, his critics allege, felt threatened by "free-thinking Jews" just as he felt threatened by his first wife's mental instability—so he sought refuge in an authoritarian Christianity as a stay against his own inner anarchy.

Donoghue agrees to a great extent with this analysis of Eliot's struggle to bind himself to an order that rescued him from solipsism, but he comes to vastly different conclusions about Eliot's religious and cultural positions. Without denying Eliot's tendency toward disgust at the body and its needs, Donoghue writes with conviction about the poet's "profound doubting belief...contiguous to Augustine, Saint John of the Cross, and Pascal." His defense of Eliot against the charges of anti-Semitism is restrained and thoughtful, though unlikely to convert the die-hard critic. Donoghue regrets that Eliot was tempted into "overexplicitness" in his social and cultural criticism, but he points out that in the years surrounding World War II, Eliot—and a host of other intellectuals—felt that the fate of civilization was at stake. Eliot's willingness to put aside his Sphinx-like mask may have led him to say too much, but it seems churlish to hold that against him.

It would be wrong to convey the impression that Donoghue's method in *Words Alone* is primarily apologetic or defensive. The book, which concentrates on Eliot's poetry, is really an extended reflection on Eliot's relationship to language. Undaunted by the mountains of commentary on Eliot's *oeuvre*, Donoghue provides fresh, unselfconscious readings of poems great and small. (Some of the most rewarding discussions are about "minor" poems like "Lune de Miel," "La Figlie che Piange," and "Marina.") The text is strewn with phrases that possess epigrammatic wisdom: the young Eliot is described as "a character in a novel by Dostoevsky"; the purpose of Eliot's poems is "to make our delusions uninhabitable"; the poetry of *Four Quartets* "does not depend upon a doctrine professed but upon a doctrine felt."

The title of the book comes from a line of Yeats—"words alone are certain good." Donoghue plays on the paradox of words that, despite their uncertainties, are "the only instruments we have." He demonstrates that, if anything, Eliot was ahead of his time in his awareness of the contingency of knowledge, the tendency of presence to flee from our words, leaving us with the paradox of meaningful absence. For Donoghue, as for all of us, Eliot remains very much our contemporary. □

Gregory Wolfe *is writer in residence at Seattle Pacific University and the editor of* Image: A Journal of the Arts and Religion.

EPILEPSY OR ECSTASY?

Lying Awake
By Mark Salzman
Alfred A. Knopf, $21, 181 pp.

Marian Burkhart

Central to the novel *Lying Awake* is an examination of conscience by a nun trained to judge her conduct under the Carmelite rule she prays will lead her to God. Although the novel's setting is far from the worlds Mark Salzman has investigated in earlier works, its emphasis on discipline, the attempt to practice a rule which can govern and give meaning to experience, is familiar. In the past, as he recounts in *Lost in Place*, Salzman pursued discipline in a manner fanatically undisciplined: studying Kung Fu with an alcoholic and sadistic master; playing jazz cello with an intensity abetted by marijuana; sitting for hours in a capsule-size cardboard box as a young boy in order to prepare to become an astronaut. But here, in his third novel and fifth book, Salzman has discovered a rule that permits him to be freed of himself and to discipline his talent. The result is so superior that it is not unreasonable to call this his masterpiece.

Lying Awake tells the story of Helen Nye, who becomes Sister John of the

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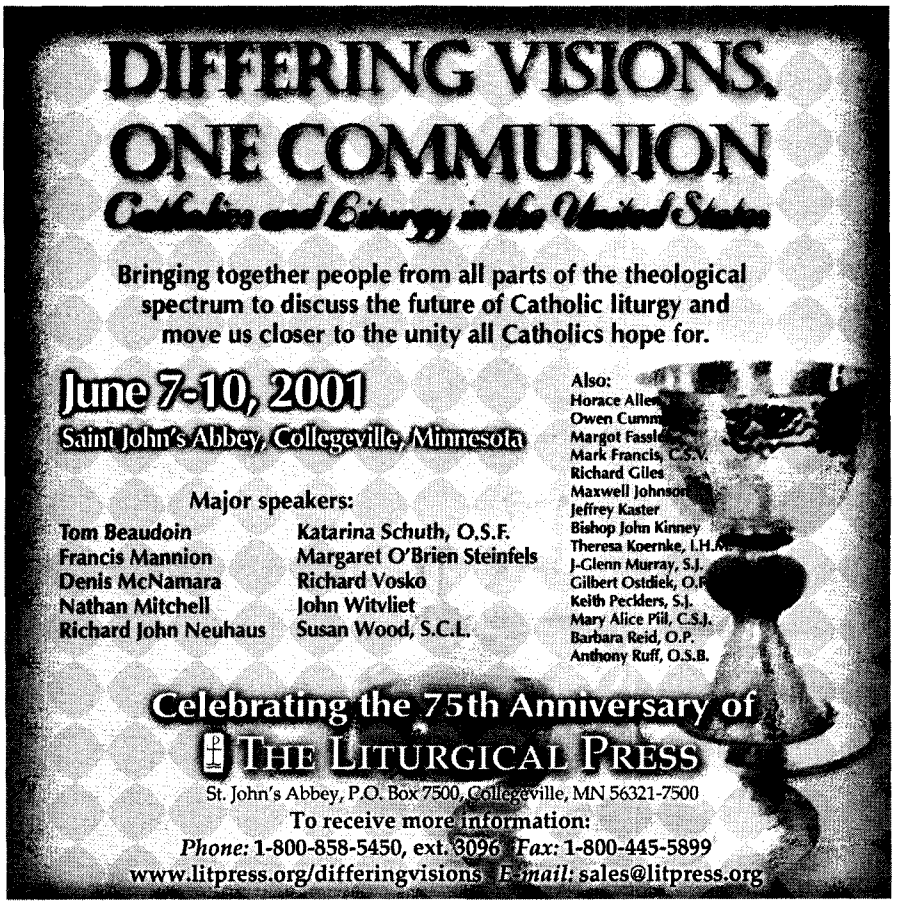

Cross, a Discalced Carmelite. Deserted in childhood by her mother, she desires not only to serve Christ but to join herself to a lover who will never forsake her. But in the years following her final profession, she feels forsaken, the routine of her convent life dry, not all of her sisters easy to love, and herself living by rote.

The first, imperfect, easing of this pain comes through an act of charity. Learning by chance that her mother lives not far from her convent, she writes, waiting for an answer with receding hope, just as she did as a child. When at last a response comes, it disappoints, again as the answers did when she was a child. Her mother comes to visit not to reclaim her daughter, but to ask Sister John never to write again. Her mother has a new family who knows nothing of her past, and she wants to protect them—and herself—by keeping her early failure hidden. Tempted to lash out, Sister instead sees her mother as she is: afraid, ashamed, and pitiable, and she frees herself of the futile longing for reunion that has dogged her all her life. She asks to see a picture of her half-siblings and to learn their names so that she can pray for them, and gives her mother the gift she craves—a daughter's silence.

After this renunciation, Sister John throws herself so Salzmanesquely into the physical demands her vows impose that she is far too busy and tired to heed her doubts. But the sense persists that she is no nearer the God she seeks than she was when her vocation began.

The aridity ends unexpectedly when she begins to suffer almost unbearable pain from what are first diagnosed as migraine headaches. As her conventual discipline requires, she yields to the pain, accepting it as what God is asking of her. In accepting the pain, she transcends it, is taken out of herself, and experiences God as having pulled her into himself. This sensation both frees and enraptures her, inspiring her to write poetry so good that the proceeds from her book enhance the community's meager income enough to enable the sisters to look forward to a most mundane blessing—repairs to their convent's leaky roof.

But the pain becomes more severe, the transcendent experience more extreme. She is "out of herself" so absolutely and for so long that what had seemed a blessing to the community as well as to Sister John becomes a burden her sisters fear will be too heavy for them to carry. Her superior insists she consult a specialist. When she does, she discovers that she suffers not from migraine headaches but from a mild case of epilepsy, a condition which surgery can most probably correct.

Sister John is caught. That she has experienced oneness with God she cannot doubt, even though it is epilepsy that has triggered the vision. But she cannot ignore the cost to her sisters. Yet if she undergoes the surgery, she will lose the rapture. Can she bear to face again the dark night from which her mysticism has rescued her? How she copes with her quandary—through a rigorous examination of conscience, an almost pitiless dissection of her motives—and how her sisters cope with it—through charity—is the crux of the novel, and a beautiful crux it is.

The book's brief chapters, even those in flashback, are titled according to the day of the liturgical year on which each event takes place, a framework that leads the reader into the rhythm that has shaped Sister John's soul. We almost hear her think in quotes from the Scriptures, the saints, the rule. Thus we are led, as she is, to realize what community means to a religious, and to follow her as she is made ready to accept herself and her place in God's plan.

Lying Awake is stripped to essentials, free of the intrusive if charming asides that pepper Salzman's earlier work. This story seems almost to be told through him rather than by him.

One wonders why this sortie into a discipline carries him to so much higher a plane than his earlier attempts. Mother Mary Joseph, the convent's "living rule," would doubtless say, as she says of Sister John, "God showers this one with graces." Could be she'd be right. □

Marian Burkhart *lives in New York City.*

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CAN COURTSHIP BE REVIVED?

Wing to Wing, Oar to Oar
Edited by Amy A. Kass and Leon R. Kass
University of Notre Dame Press, $15, 636 pp.

Maura A. Ryan

The cover of the September 25, 2000 issue of *Time* featured a familiar tableau of the modern broken home—the lonely only child caught between warring parents. Inside, under the banner "What Divorce Does to Kids," psychologists and sociologists hotly debated a question that has plagued us since the divorce boom began in the early 1970s: "Is a good divorce better than a bad marriage?" Prompted by Judith Wallerstein's controversial study ["The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce: A Twenty-five Year Study,"], which seems to suggest that the children of divorce suffer such serious long-term personal and social difficulties that even a frosty marriage is better for them than the most amiable divorce, this present debate is part of a larger social reflection on the fate of contemporary marriage. The experts disagree about the precise legacy of divorce as well as about how to stem its most negative effects. But no one denies that it takes its toll on children, particularly on their later ability to form healthy and satisfying adult relationships. And whether we answer "bad marriage" or "good divorce," most of us would readily admit that what we want for our own children of marriageable age is neither one.

Convinced that young people today, and not just the children of divorce, are ill prepared to "marry well," University of Chicago professors Amy and Leon Kass offer this rich and "unapologetically promarriage" anthology, designed to help them and their parents think critically about the enterprise of taking on and becoming a spouse. Part of the "Ethics of Everyday Life" series, this is an impressive collection of classic writings on love and marriage. Selections ranging from Plato to Genesis to Miss Manners are arranged as answers of sorts to the fundamental questions we ask as we begin to think about settling down: "Is This Love?" "How Can I Find and Win the Right One?" "Why A Wedding?" At the heart of the collection is a set of reflections on the lost art of courtship, those established rituals of days gone by through which young adults, at least those of a certain class, not only found life companions, but also were supposed to learn the particular duties of partnership.

Wing to Wing, Oar to Oar is meant to be a classroom text, a springboard for discussion, and this is its greatest strength. As in an artfully arranged bouquet, literary pieces (Austen, Tolstoy, Muir, Shakespeare), evocative in their own right, work together with philosophical and theological reflections (Kierkegaard, Tocqueville, Rilke, Kant), passages from the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, and journalistic treatises on the benefits and burdens of marriage by the likes of Benjamin Franklin, to form a singular impression. Kass and Kass want to touch the reader's deepest longings for intimacy, permanence, and companionship. The volume includes both historical and contemporary discussions of the nature of love and marriage; for example, Aquinas's treatise on the goods of marriage, Aristotle's celebration of the friendship between spouses, and William May's "Four Mischievous Theories of Sex," but it is the short stories, poems, and snippets from great works such as Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* that aim to "make us think...expand our sympathies, elevate our gaze" about the mysteries of love and fidelity in a way that philosophizing cannot.

In their introduction, Kass and Kass describe this ambitious collection as offered in the "wisdom-seeking rather than wisdom-delivering" spirit. To be sure, there is much wisdom here for those who want to think hard about the improbable and wondrous achievement of a happy and lasting marriage. There is also an argument, the authors admit, running through both the selection and arrangement of pieces. Roughly, it goes as follows: At one time, there were established cultural and, to some extent, religious rituals of courtship that helped individuals learn the responsibilities of spousehood and, by postponing sexual intimacy, disciplined eros in the service of committed marriage. As a practice overseen by parents, courtship functioned not only to help young adults find suitable partners but also to make them aware of the social importance and function of marriage. Under the influence of liberalism, with its challenge to authority and its elevation of individual autonomy, and feminism, with its encouragement of self-actualization for women beyond the mother role, those rituals have broken down,

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"He ceases to amaze me."

along with sexual responsibility and the stability of marriage and family life. Young people now have little direction in choosing the right spouse and little help in learning how to move from self-concerned adolescence to family- and society-centered adulthood. In addition, many have witnessed the end of the marriage of their own parents and regard the expectation of a lasting relationship as a nice but out-of-reach fantasy.

Anyone who works with college-age students is familiar with the superficial cynicism about marriage and family and the intermingling of distrust of commitment with deep longing for permanence and partnership. We have all watched bright and wonderful students "bumble along from one unsatisfying relationship to another," and wondered helplessly what we should be giving them by way of "lessons in love." However, as an argument, this book is disappointing. To begin with, it rests on questionable assumptions, most notably that men need to be "civilized" into marriage and female modesty is the civilizing force. The editors claim to avoid simplistic nostalgia in their focus on classic works on love, but the images of women in traditional courtship and the absence of any critical discussion of the "feminine" and "masculine" virtues give more than a nod to the hope of resurrecting the chaste and untouchable Victorian woman. Most people would agree that neither sexual nor social liberation has been unambiguously positive for women. Young women are deeply conflicted about a sexual "revolution" that seems only to have made it easier for men to avoid responsibility for their actions. Many of our high-achieving and professionally oriented female students reject the very label of "feminist" because they associate it with untenable, either-or choices between the goods of marriage and family, and personal development. It is both disheartening and dangerous, though, to look for a solution to the contemporary challenges to intimacy in the cultivation of those virtues needed by women in the face of men's "natural sexual, familial, and civic irresponsibility."

Beginning with the presumption that men cannot control their baser instincts is hardly conducive to calling forth the qualities of tenderness and respect needed for a healthy marriage. Moreover, that very presumption has been long identified as a contributing factor in the sexual and physical abuse of women.

As a collection of "great works" on love, sex, and marriage, this volume is also intentionally unbalanced. Most of the selections are written before the middle of the twentieth century and therefore, are written by men. One need not deny that men can write wisely about love and marriage to wonder what would be learned from hearing more from women about matters of such obvious concern to them. More important, there is almost no critical attention to the broader political and social construction of marriage and family life. The questions raised by Susan Moller Okin and others, for example, about the economic function of the patriarchal family and its relation to the vulnerability of women and children, are never engaged, nor is there any suggestion about how social institutions might work toward supporting family life. It is taken for granted that all the threats to the stability of marriage are ideological. For that reason, important opportunities to question how factors such as employment, health, education, religion, and even geography influence the conditions for intimacy and mutual commitment are missed.

Most disappointing of all, one comes away from this volume feeling that, in the end, it contains few really satisfying answers to the crucial and intriguing questions it poses. There are inspiring snapshots and glimpses throughout of the qualities that sustain a lifelong partnership. We are reminded in Ben Franklin's "Reflections on Courtship and Marriage" that mutual, unfeigned esteem and sincere friendship are the foundations of a lasting marriage. Eugene Borowitz's "Speaking Personally" recalls that it is through the risk of self-enlargement, through the enduring relationships and serious commitments we undertake, that we become fully who we are meant to be. But it is not obvious how the return to earlier rituals of courtship is supposed to help young men and women develop mutual respect and learn the skills of intimate friendship when they are daily bombarded by the reduction of male-female friendship to sex and the trivialization of sex. Nor is it clear how this return to the classics is supposed to help young people learn how to live in companionship with a spouse when many of them, at least the children of middle and upper-middle class families, have never shared a bedroom or a bathroom. Young people are not hungry for elaborate rules for "winning" her or "trapping" him (popular magazines are full of those). Rather they look for living examples of how to perform the everyday deeds of love and esteem that sustain a lifelong partnership, to learn how to think as an "us" and to walk what might be called the "way of fidelity."

Kass and Kass are right that teenagers see little reason to postpone sex, and, therefore, sell themselves short of the experience of the total and complete self-giving that is possible only when sex is part of a life pledged to another. They

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are also right that teenagers have a difficult time understanding why sustaining commitments is valuable even when self-sacrifice is involved. This book will be most useful, however, if it prompts those of us in happy marriages to be self-conscious and articulate about why we committed ourselves to such a relationship. We must demonstrate what it takes to cherish one another as an everyday enterprise, and what sustains us when we are beginning to fail one another.

We are attracted to ways of life, willing to assume the necessary sacrifices and burdens, because we are drawn to them as intrinsically worthy. It is as important to try to convince young people of the merits of commitment and to teach them the rules of courtship. But it is just as important to live the joy that drew us to one another, to treat each other in public with the regard we philosophize about, to invite young people into our homes and around our dinner tables, and to be honest about how we handle practical problems like snoring, money, and wet towels on the floor. □

Maura A. Ryan *is associate professor of Christian ethics at the University of Notre Dame.*

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 4)

Cohen seems to put great store in Rolf Hochhuth's play, *The Deputy*. I'm certain Phayer would be embarrassed by the comparison. Even John Cornwell, author of *Hitler's Pope*, dismissed *The Deputy* as "historical fiction based on scant documentation."

ROBERT P. LOCKWOOD
New York, N.Y.

The writer is director of research for The Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights.

Pius's heroism

As one who has been evaluating the literature about Pius XII and the Holocaust for over three decades, I must strongly dissent from Richard Cohen's laudatory review of the books by Michael Phayer and Susan Zucotti. Cohen's contention that the Jewish criticism of Pius XII was pent up until Rolf Hochhuth's play *The Deputy* "opened the floodgates" in 1963 is pure fantasy. During the war and afterward, Jewish leaders lavishly praised the wartime pontiff. In 1945, the World Jewish Congress donated $20,000 to Vatican charities, "in recognition of the work of the Holy See in rescuing Jews from Facist and Nazi persecution." In May 1955 the Israeli government flew their entire Philharmonic Orchestra to Rome to play for the pope as an expression of gratitude for his help during the Holocaust.

Phayer and Zucotti both use the same double standard: read all the evidence favorable to Pius XII in the worst light and subject it to the strictest test, but read unfavorable evidence in the best light and subject it to no test. The myth of Pius's "silence," endorsed by both authors, ignores the many denunciations of Nazi war crimes by Vatican Radio and *L'Osservatore Romano*, and the wartime judgment of all parties about the pope's own statements and actions.

Both writers attack Pius XII for doing little or nothing to rescue Roman Jews in October 1943. The Jewish biographer of Winston Churchill, Sir Martin Gilbert, writes that "the pope himself gave his personal order...to open the sanctuaries of the Vatican City to all Jews who could reach it...The papal action, which I do not find mentioned in the current '*j'accuse*' style debates, saved more than four thousand lives."

Phayer and Zucotti both make much of the argument that there is no documentary evidence linking the pope to efforts to save the Jews. Holocaust deniers use the same argument, pointing out that there is no written evidence Hitler ever ordered the mass slaughter of the Jews. Both authors overlook the testimony of numerous witnesses, some still living, that the pope repeatedly ordered Jewish rescue efforts—orally and in documents, which, for good reason, were quickly destroyed by their recipients.

(REV.) JOHN JAY HUGHES
Saint Louis, Mo.

The reviewer replies:

It is always worrying when people disagree with you by taking issue with an argument you never proposed.

To comment first on Monsignor Maniscalco's letter: of course Pius XII was concerned for the Jews and their fate, and he abominated the Nazis. What is at issue is whether he acted in the best way to save Jews and deal with Hitler. What both the books under review show, carefully and without having taken up entrenched positions, is that Pius did not do enough in either respect. They deal thoroughly with the argument that any action or declaration against Hitler by Pius would have had dire consequences, and Zuccotti in particular evaluates the evidence that Pius was responsible for saving the lives of Jews. She explicitly shows why Pius was thanked after the war by members of the Jewish community—and it was not because he went out of his way to save Jewish lives.

Lockwood finds no evidence in Michael Phayer's book that Pius XII was sympathetic to Germany and intensely anti-Communist. This surprises me. Both Phayer's book and other recent studies have made Pius's position very clear. Pius considered Communism the greater evil because he saw it as a complete philosophy—something which he did not believe Nazism ever was.

Phayer convincingly deals with the old argument that any explicit attack on Nazism by Pius would have had damaging consequences—and this includes the case of the Dutch clergy, and the reprisals following their denunciation of Hitler. To summarize a complex chapter in the book: we can't know for sure; but how could matters have been worse?

Robert Lockwood and John Jay Hughes both suggest I put great store by *The Deputy*. They miss the point. A play may have significant faults but still have great effect. Before Hochhuth there was minimal criticism of Pius XII; thereafter there was a great deal. As the British journalist Bernard Levin wrote after seeing the

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play, "The charge is that he failed to excommunicate or anathematize Hitler, failed to denounce his slaughter of the Jews, failed to order his church to pray for the martyred, failed even to tear up the Concordat." Hochhuth changed Pius's reputation, whether one likes the fact or not. For Hughes to disregard this truth casts some doubt on the value of his "over three decades" of evaluation.

In 1999 I spent several days talking with Peter Gumpel, the Jesuit in charge of the case for Pius XII's beatification. He left me in no doubt that Pius was not anti-Semitic and that he detested Hitler—the Nazis were, Pius wrote, "false prophets with the pride of Lucifer." But those views in themselves are not enough. Phayer's book and Zuccotti's, by judicious argument, show why not. Pius XII was never "Hitler's Pope," but his pontificate was a tragedy for the church, and the world. RICHARD COHEN

John Paul II misread

I was astounded by Luke Timothy Johnson's incredible misinterpretation ["A Disembodied 'Theology of the Body,'" January 26] of the two talks the pope gave successively in 1980 on October 1 and 8. Johnson claims that in the first talk, the Holy Father "declares that a husband cannot be guilty of 'lust in the heart' for his wife, but a week later he...states confidently that even a husband can sin in this fashion."

In fact, in the first talk the pope states straightforwardly the arguments favoring a position which he himself considers ill founded: that a husband cannot be guilty of lust towards his own wife. The pope says, "This interpretation of Christ's words seems to correspond...to logic...nevertheless, good grounds for doubt remain as to whether this reasoning takes into account all the aspects of revelation as well as the theology of the body." Earlier in the talk the pope notes that it is a narrow interpretation of Jesus' words based only on a couple's civil status. In other words, this logic is legalistic—and he rejects it!

He ends the first talk by saying that Christ "made the moral evaluation [of lust] depend above all on the personal dignity itself of the man and the woman. This has importance both when it is a question of persons who are not married—and perhaps even more—when they are spouses." How can Johnson possibly see this as declaring that a husband cannot be guilty of lust in his heart toward his own wife? In the second talk, the pope expands on the reasons precisely for denying such a position!

Surprisingly enough, Johnson's error seems to be in his failure to recognize a "literary form" used for centuries: present your opponant's case as effectively as you can, then show its weaknesses. I'm sure Johnson has heard of "literary forms." Doesn't he know they exist even outside biblical studies? His error here is just a hint of the shallowness of much of the rest of his critique.

(REV.) EDWARD J. BAYER
Randallstown, Md.

The author replies:

Now that Edward Bayer has explicated the pope's text, I can see that I misreported when I said that he contradicted himself when he presented an argument one week against the possibility of a man committing adultery in his heart against his own wife, and then argued the next week that in fact a man could lust adulterously after his wife. I clearly missed the full weight of the surrounding paragraphs that indicated that the pope would revisit a matter that, by his own argument, "has all the characteristics of objective correctness and accuracy" (October 1, 1980). It is good to know that in this matter the pope cannot be inconsistent.

Two brief comments, then a final question. First, Bayer may be correct that Pope John Paul II argued dialectically, but he goes too far when he suggests that one should have spotted here the use of a technical literary form. Second, is Bayer really comforted by the pope's final position that a husband, when he desires his wife sexually (okay, let's say *only* sexually, or *really* sexually) as the pope so attractively puts it, for the "mere satisfaction of the sexual need of the body"—is committing adultery in the heart? Is he pleased at the conclusion, "Man can commit this adultery in the heart also with regard to his own wife, if he treats her only as an object to satisfy instinct"? Is sheer sexual desire for one's spouse sinful?

The final question: Am I missing something? Bayer says that my mistaken reportage on this point "is just a hint of the shallowness of much of the rest of his critique." Could he tell me in what this shallowness consists? Is it my appeal to a deeper appreciation for the ambiguities at the heart of human sexual identity and activity? Is it my observation that in the pope's conferences women tend not to appear as sexual or moral agents? Is it my queries concerning the logic of *Humanae vitae*? Is it my suggestion that the universal prohibition of condoms may be morally unacceptable in the light of an AIDS pandemic affecting thousands if not millions of innocent people? Is it my suggestion that moral discernment in the church ought to pay attention to the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of adult, and sexually active, Christians? Which of these reflects a theological or moral shallowness?

LUKE TIMOTHY JOHNSON

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GOD'S BEST FRIEND

Frans Jozef van Beeck

We humans practice symbiosis with a vengeance. We cultivate cattle, goats, pigs, ducks, chickens, rabbits, bees, monkeys, birds, cats, and a wide array of dogs. Some animals seek us out. Our heads attract lice, our small intestines tapeworms, our houses invite mice, spiders, and cockroaches. But when it comes to animals attracted to us, dogs take the cake. They are our "best friend." They empathize, welcome us beyond the call of duty, console, watch out, defend, finish leftovers, lick our hands. They love us. They expect our attention even as they glower at us—the scrawny stray, the pockmarked cur, the wide-ranging mutt, the all-purpose trash-can cleaner, the inconvenient public copulator. They can be a bit much.

I refuse to admit dogs into the classroom; I know how wonderful they are, but they are not part of my academic world. Shopkeepers, sextons, sacristans, judges, pharmacists, department store managers all agree: No Dogs Allowed. That's precisely where my story starts, though.

At least from Roman times, dogs have lived with us in all public places: yards, streets, even temple areas. They were a familiar sight in the Roman basilicas, and still frequented eighteenth-century churches, especially Catholic ones, before pews were adopted to keep the people in their place. (Dogs must have disappeared from churches soon after; they know the difference between kennels that imprison you and friendly, public places where people and dogs expect to see others—and to be seen.)

At the far end of every ancient pagan basilica there was an elevated area called the *bema*. It was the area for serious business: lobbying, currying favors, conspiring, stitching coalitions together, trading commodities. Even more important, the judges held court there, and no dogs were allowed. How to manage this efficiently? You put up wooden latticework fences (*cancelli*), low brick walls, or even metal grating to separate the court personnel from the crowd and from the dogs that love crowds—an essential requirement for serious business, since dogs are shameless about doing their business in public. A minor official, the *cancellarius*, or fence keeper, was stationed at the place of entry. He kept out strangers and dogs. Now we know what happens when officialdom enters the picture: function turns into rank. In this case the fence keeper became the "chancellor."

What you have just read is a brief history of the "chancel" in Anglican churches and the Communion rail that marks off the sanctuary in Catholic ones. Originally designed to keep out dogs and strangers, *cancelli* came to be used to keep out "the people." When we had dogs in our churches, dogs were refused admission near the altar, the font, and the lectern.

While we had dogs in our churches, one thing was clear: the whole church was the sanctuary. It was the common property of God's people. And people were proud of it. The church embraced the world; so did church buildings. Churches were public places and dogs abounded. They were only kept away from the area where we were being serious in church. An unsatisfactory situation. Seriously. So we got serious about church buildings.

The bitter fruit of this seriousness is "real churches"—the kind where you go only to pray, and where the ordained and their companions go about their earnest business way up front. The kind of church you close and lock when nothing (that is, no service) is going on. People were no longer welcome, except to "attend" religious services. At that point, the chancel was no longer needed. So it was canonized: it became the Communion rail—an object of devotion, and much later on, of discord between the kneelers and the standers at the banquet of unity.

What continued, though, was the fence keeper's instinct. Chancellors (often referred to as ushers) saw to it that the Communion rail was a place where order prevailed, and where the nonordained met the priests across the good fences that "make good neighbors." Dogs, of course, were gone; their place had been taken by the laity, and the sanctuary was a restricted area, reserved to the ordained. Thank God for the renewal of Vatican II. It gave us the *Constitution on the Church* (*Lumen gentium*), which treated the unity of God's people before ever raising the issue of the church's ordained servants. Now, happily, "ordinary" laity are once again where they belong.

But, apparently, the fence keepers' instincts continue to thrive. Chancellors abound. They tell us there are limits to promiscuity and that the *bema* should be kept for doing serious business. If judges and similar high officials have to stay apart, neither should the ordained join the people, either when preaching to them or (worse) to exchange the kiss of peace. The fence can once again be counted on to do an essential job: protect the ordained from being mistaken for the laity.

I have been a priest for thirty-seven years but I have never been mistaken for a layperson while going about Christ's business in the liturgy. Dressed in an unmistakable way, the celebrant doesn't need a Communion rail, and neither does the congregation. And as for dogs, I must admit that in over half a century of priesthood I have yet to see one of man's best friends in church. □

Frans Jozef van Beeck, S.J., *is a senior professor of theology at Loyola Chicago.*

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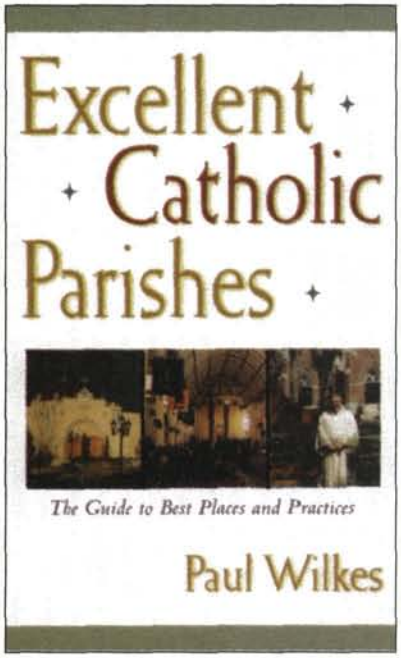

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Paul Wilkes

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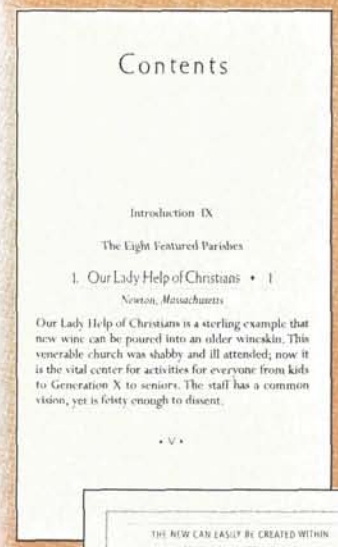
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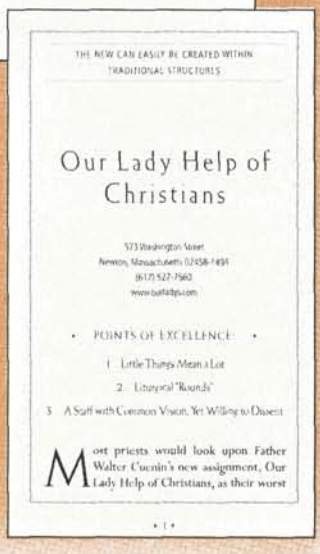
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